

## Footloose on the Trail - A Through Hike on the Pacific Crest Trail





This adventure is dedicated to the memory of Angel Betts, a person who I loved. A person who died young. Angel gave me my trail name, "Bobaroo" which I proudly carried from border to border.



# One day before start - Travel and Trail Angels

Wednesday, April 15, 2015

Oh my gosh, HERE I GO! It is Wednesday, April 15.

I got up at 2 AM and my wife, Valorie, took me to the Seattle Tacoma Airport.



My flight on Alaska Airlines left at 6:30 AM and I arrived in San Diego at 9:15.

What is so amazing about this adventure are the people who support the hikers. They are called "trail angels".

This video explains who trail angels are (<https://youtu.be/cVi6Ce0vvZM>):

Bob Riess is one of these people. He is the original "trail-head hiker host" who pioneered the idea in 1999. He has hosted over 500 hikers, and helps them get last minute supplies, hosts them for the evening in his home, and then gets them to the southern terminus of the Pacific Crest Trail at sunrise.

He met me at the airport and hosted me for the day and night in his home.

There are two other hikers here. One from San Francisco and another from Germany. There are two others arriving tonight. We will have an early breakfast and arrive at the trail head at first light.





Here is a short video about Bob and the work he does (<https://youtu.be/7t4h5IUq25I>):

Tomorrow morning I will start walking the trail. I'm not sure I will get much sleep tonight.

An amazing journey is just beginning!

## Comments

- [Nickki](#)

April 15, 2015

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Oh Bob that is so cool! Thankful that you will have those helpers along the way! Good luck and I'm sure you'll be too excited to sleep tonight!

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

April 15, 2015

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I hope you get some sleep tonight, sweetie. There are not captions as such, but I don't think they are needed?

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

April 15, 2015

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I'm excited for you, and proud that you've put in all of the work to get yourself to the start of your journey!

- [JoeAntush](#)

April 16, 2015

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Happy Trails BZ, have a GGREAT journey!!!!

- [GuyRickBetts](#)

April 16, 2015

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I am sure you will do great and have an experience of a lifetime, prayers for you and your trail angels. .

- [AnneEZJones](#)

April 16, 2015

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Hi Daddy! I'm so proud of you to take on such a giant quest! You have inspired me while

growing up with you strong will power, great sense of humor, almost unreal work ethic, how you made some jobs around the house not chores but almost like a game to get things done perfectly and have fun doing it too. You have an outlook kinda like "well, if you want it then take a step back, figure out what you need, make a plan and get to it! I'll be watching for your updates everyday!  
Oh!! What is YOUR trail name?  
Love you Daddy, little a

# Day 1 - Mexican border

Wednesday, April 15, 2015

Thursday, April 16

We arose bright and early at 4:30 AM. There are five of us starting the trail this morning. Bob Riess, our host, drove like crazy and got us to the southern monument just before sunrise.

Everyone is really excited and we all paused for pictures at the monument.



In order to claim a full through-hike, I walked over and touched the metal fence at the border.

I also signed the trail register and wrote this note:

*I start on a journey that will likely answer questions that I never even thought to ask.*

I started hiking at 6:15 and watched the sun rise over the hill. Soon I was at the one mile marker.



I felt really strong all day and found the desert to be amazing. There is a lot of greenery and lots of blooming plants. This one had an amazing spiked pod.



At the start there was a strong wind and it felt chilly. When I finally got out of the wind it was perfect hiking weather.



I had to take a picture of my shadow on the trail.

I made it to Houser Canyon by 11:30. There was a group of through-hikers there resting in the shade. I got to meet "Mother Goose", a well-known hiker of the trail.

From Hauser Canyon starts a 1,300 foot climb with no shade. To my surprise, I didn't have much of a problem and made it to Lake Morina by 2:30. I fixed my dinner there, filled up on water, and hiked on until 4:30. Here is my camp site.





I ended up hiking 26.6 miles today!  
Here is the elevation profile from the PCT Gutthooks app:



Tomorrow I have a 3,000 foot climb so I'll have to start early to beat the heat.

## Comments

- [Nickki](#)

April 16, 2015

26.6! Awesome for day 1 :) Love the message you left, sleep well!!

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

April 16, 2015

Sounds like a great first day! So happy to be able to follow along via your blog. I hope that you'll have good connectivity so we can all follow along during your adventure!

- [GuyRickBetts](#)

April 16, 2015

This is great Bob you have such a way of saying the things that we want to hear. ...sleep well for tomorrow. .

- [SarahMack](#)

April 16, 2015

awesome

## Day 2 - Up 3,000 feet - Oh My

Friday, April 17, 2015

Friday, April 17

As I mentioned yesterday, today I had to climb 3000 feet. The PCT kicked my rear!

I started packing up at 5 AM, and was on the trail by 6:15. It's taking me way too long to get ready to go.

An interesting sign along the way warns about explosives that were lost and are likely to explode if you find them.



I must have seen over 100 lizards.



The reward for getting to the top of the climb was to be in a forest of pine trees.



There have been some very pretty flowering desert plants.



Some of the pine trees have giant cones.



I stopped at Burnt Ranchiera campground and had my breakfast – lunch – dinner and then headed on down the trail. Needless to say, I am exhausted.

I am camped at mile 46.4.

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

April 17, 2015

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Why are you eating breakfast, lunch and dinner in one place and time? That sounds .... unhealthy.

- [SteveE](#)

April 17, 2015

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Life on the trail looks to be pretty relaxed. 5am? Really? That's almost lunch time for pre-trail Bob!  
Making and breaking camp will feel like a chore for a while. Especially when you're tired. Eventually you'll get a nice routine going and it will be almost effortless. Until then, relax and enjoy the process. It will take as long as it takes. Don't start the day stressed. It's a long trip, and you'll have plenty of opportunities to make up time.  
Enjoy

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

April 17, 2015

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I hope you're able to get some rest--sounds like a grueling day. I imagine it will take a bit of time to get into a routine, sleeping outdoors, etc. Keep hydrated!

- [CarrieVanDyck](#)

April 18, 2015

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thanks for sharing. as paul says...stay hydrated. 300 feet and 20 miles seems like you could take today off?

- [AnneEZJones](#)

April 18, 2015

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Oh Daddy! I'm so glad you are posting most days. I've printed out your trek and posted it in the living room . I can hardly imagine how exciting it must be for you because I am



super excited that you are doing this monster journey! I wish I could hike with you a few days!! Of course those would have to be the days when you wanted a break from making process on the trail and didn't mind waiting for my hobbled feet to catch up with you.

Maybe one of these days you can show me a easy Anne trail once you get home and rest up a little bit. I really really miss the little short hikes around the cabin we would go and adventure about. Or even better when we would go foraging for mushrooms, now that was SUPER FUN! Remember the last time we (You, Jason, Debra, and me) went out behind the cabin and started finding all of those beautiful beautiful boletes? There were so many perfect mushrooms we didn't have enough room to carry any more and ended up putting some in the hoods of our coats! So so so much fun and a great memory. I really hope we get to make more memories like that soon I love you Daddy. Be safe and as they keep telling me (too) drink your water and stay hydrated. Eat a donut, too! You're too skinny!! I'll end my note now by wishing you restful sleep and good dreams. Keep posting pictures just like you have been, I sorta feel like I'm right there with you!

I miss you already, hope you are having a blast and remember to take a break every once in awhile. What do they say? It's about the journey not just the finish line?

(I'm all talk... You are the doer) I'll stop talking and let you "do".

Love you to the moon and back, Daddy!  
Your little kid. Little a

- [BobZimmerman](#)

April 22, 2015

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I eat some carbohydrates for breakfast as I walk, and snack all morning and early afternoon. I usually stop and cook dinner at a source of water. If it is still early, I head on down the trail until I'm too tired, or when it is starting to get dark.

## Day 3 - Epic Desert Hiking

Sunday, April 19, 2015

Saturday, April 18

What a perfect day for hiking. I got on the trail before 6 AM and made good time. Patti, my hiking buddy, sent me a text as she and Debbie were on their walk. I surprised them by giving them a call and we chatted for a few minutes.

By 10 AM I had already made 11 miles. My feet are doing pretty well because I stop every 2 1/2 hours to clean them and change socks. I've seen a lot of people with really bad blisters.

From where I camped last night, the trail drops down 3,000 feet in the next 30 miles. That made the hiking really fun. The desert is in bloom everywhere. The cacti and desert flowers are amazing.



The major problem in this area is the availability of water. There is a listing of all the reliable water sources and everyone stops to fill up. I met up with a number of through

hikers, but I seem to be a faster hiker than most so I haven't been hiking with a group yet. I think I'm a failure at my social skills!

At the last reliable water supply, there was a lot of talk about how to make it to the next water source. There's supposed to be a water cache about 22 miles away, but some wondered if there would be any water left. The next resupply is 32 miles away. I loaded up with 6 liters and headed down the trail. I finally found a campsite just as the sun was setting. This is the view as I "cowboy camp" for the first time.



I am camped at mile 75.3, just under 30 miles today!

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

April 19, 2015

I see you ARE trying to catch up to the leaders! Crazy, man. Or should that be "crazy man"? Please remember to eat and drink water, and drink in the beauty around you too. Lovely photos. <3

- [AnneEZJones](#)

April 19, 2015

Wow! Dad, you are making my day of working look like I walked from the Living room to the bathroom in comparison. I'm still in awe of what you are doing and so jealous that you get to see the desert in full bloom! You are doing so great starting out with some GUSTO in your pocket! I love you, Daddy. If you happen to come to an area that is filled with super desert beauty, please try to capture the images with that great camera eye you have so we can see it too! I wouldn't worry too much about your socialability just yet, I'm sure in time your find the group that can keep up with you soon enough. I really wish I could be there with you (...maybe I'd need a trail scooter to keep up but it sure would be fun!) it looks so pretty and the whole adventure of it all. It's not just a long weekend out in nature. No, it's nearly a half YEAR out in the elements with nature and not many people these days will get to do what you have trained and worked so hard for. I am still amazed that you are out doing it. It's just so cool and majorly inspiring to not only me but everyone I tell about your trek! I'll stop rambling for today... But I do have great news!! The Mariners came back and beat the Texas Rangers at Safeco Field in the bottom of the 9th to take the series 2 games to one! At one point we

were down four runs and it was just a crazy game as far as scoring. A total of 21 runs! (Mariners got their 11th run in the bottom of the 9th). 30 total hits by both teams (13 for Texas, 17 for Seattle) Well... Besides reading your update from the trail that was my excitement for the day I'll stop boring you with my baseball obsession and let you get back to nature and your journey. I love you Dad, miss you so much already! Looking forward to your next update.  
With love, your little A

- [RonZimmerman](#)

April 19, 2015

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"Cowboy Camp?" Aren't there about 5 species of snakes where your are who might want to share your sleeping bag?

- [GuyRickBetts](#)

April 19, 2015

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Don't worry about the scorpions, they only come out at night. . :)



## Day 4 - The Real Desert

Monday, April 20, 2015

Sunday, April 19

I cowboy camped last night and LOVED IT! When I first made camp the coyotes started yelping. I yelped back. It seems like forever since I looked up at the stars. I saw shooting stars and satellites. And on the morning it was so easy to break camp.

The trail up from Scissors Crossing is notorious for being hot. This is the real desert. I loved the barrel cacti.



The plan today was to make it to the water cache, which was about twenty miles up the trail. Although the trail climbed steadily, it was a gradual climb. I love my hiking shirt and pants because they are well ventilated. I made 11 miles by ten so I kept a good pace.

At the water cache I met Rasputin, Full Roll and Phantom. Full Roll got his name because he always carries a full roll of toilet paper!

I ate my lunch-dinner at the cache and then headed to Barrel Springs, the next reliable water source. It was a nine mile hike through the heat of the day. I paused at Billy Goats cave.



Just before getting to Barrel Springs, I hit the 100 mile mark!



I like the sign posted there.



To top it off, when I got to Barrel Springs, there was trail magic awaiting. I got a beer and a chocolate pancake!



Tomorrow is an 8 mile hike to Warner Springs. I hope to get a shower there, a real breakfast and pick up my first resupply package.

I am camped tonight at mile 101.2.

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

April 20, 2015

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I'm glad to see you are slowing a bit. It sounds like you are really enjoying it!

- [SteveE](#)

April 20, 2015

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Congratulations on the first 100 miles!  
It looks like you are starting to get the swing of things.

Exciting times ahead. Enjoy.

- [AnneEZJones](#)

April 20, 2015

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Mmmmmm! Beer! Congrats on the first of 26 100 miles, Dad! Watching and waiting on your posts everyday. Stay safe and happy love you!!

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

April 20, 2015

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Congratulations on making the first 100 miles! Very impressive to be averaging 25+ miles/day. I hope you're enjoying the journey and scenery. It looks like you're already more than 1/2 way to Palm Springs! I remember riding through the mountain range NW of Palm Springs when we did our big motorcycle trip years ago. It was beautiful country and I'm sure you'll get to enjoy it more than we did from the road! :)

- [BobZimmerman](#)

April 22, 2015

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Thanks, Steve. I hope to start hiking with a couple who are "Triple Crowners" - they have hiked the PCT, CDT, & AT, and are doing the PCT again. They have a wealth of knowledge to share!

- [BobZimmerman](#)

April 22, 2015

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I probably will go slower now that I have joined a group. They keep a good pace, but not as fast as I was doing. My daily miles might drop, but it's fun talking with people who know the trail. "No Trace" is helping me to adjust my pack so it carries better.

- [BobZimmerman](#)

April 22, 2015

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Snakes seem to like to keep away from people. I have only seen a few and have had no "close calls".

- [BobZimmerman](#)

April 22, 2015

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Are they edible? Catch a few and add them to my creamy mashed potatoes?

- [GuyRickBetts](#)

April 22, 2015

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Yes they are, except the end of the tail. ...careful catching them though. ...:)

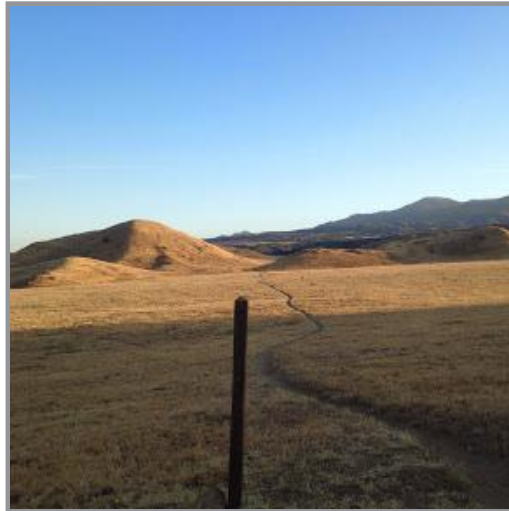


## Day 5 - America the Beautiful

Tuesday, April 21, 2015

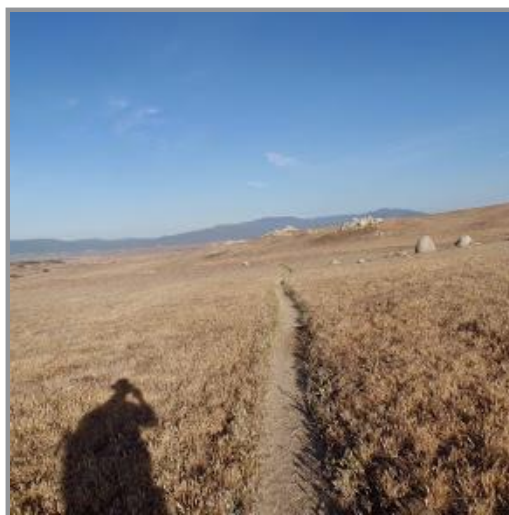
Monday, April 20

A day like today is what makes through hiking so amazing. I left Barrel Springs just before sunrise and witnessed an amazing transformation of the landscape. I was now in rolling grassland, complete with gophers, hawks, and butterflies.



I entered a grove of giant oak trees and said "good morning" to Rasputin who had found an awesome campsite and was just about to leave. I hoped to see him later down the trail.

I then spotted an amazing sight in the distance. It was Eagle Rock.



I took the side trail and tears came to my eyes. Here in this beautiful county was this amazing rock formation.



The trail dropped down through groves of giant oak trees and a refreshing stream cascaded beside the trail. I was in heaven!

Soon I made it to Warmer Springs to pick up my first resupply box. My first stop, however, was at the Community Center.



They cater to all of the hikers, providing hot food, showers, laundry, water, wifi, and rides to the Post office to pickup resupply boxes. I quickly sat down to a yummy breakfast of scrambled eggs, sausage, pancakes and a glass of orange juice. I then headed to the shower, which was barely warm but wonderful in removing days of sweat and grit. I even washed my shirt and underwear!

As I was walking back to where I left my pack, the local sheriff asked if anyone needed a ride to the post office, which was a mile away. Four of us crammed into the back seat and got our resupply boxes. The sheriff waited for us and gave us a ride back. What great service.

This is what the camper area looked like.



I left Warner Springs around noon, but had to return when I remembered that I hadn't paid for all their services. By 12:30 I was back on the trail. This is what it looked like as a group of us headed towards the hills in the distance.



I spent the rest of the day hiking back up into the high desert hills which you can see in the photo above. What makes this more difficult is carrying 6 liters of water (about 12 pounds) in addition to carrying all of the new food supplies.

I hiked until I crested the top of the hill and made camp. Tomorrow I have another 7 miles to the next reliable water supply.

It amazes me that every day I see beauty that brings tears to my eyes. I'm so thankful to witness all of this.

I'm camped tonight at mile 122.1

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

April 21, 2015

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Wow. Do you feel like the trail is home, now? It seems as if you are really starting to feel a part of it. And mile 122! You are trucking along. <3

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

April 21, 2015

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Sounds fantastic!

- [BobZimmerman](#)

April 22, 2015

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Yes, I now have the "reputation" of being a fast hiker. I think the 2 1/2 hours on the treadmill every day made a HUGE difference in my ability to go long hours up the grade.

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

April 22, 2015

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Told ya!

## Day 6 - Desert Fog

Tuesday, April 21, 2015

Tuesday, April 21

I awoke this morning to find my sleeping bag covered in dew. In addition I noticed that it was foggy. I was about 1/2 hour late waking up, so I didn't hit the trail until 6:30.

This is all I could see as I walked the trail.



My destination was the next reliable source of water, a tank about 7 miles away. With a brisk wind and blowing fog, I had to wear my fleece to stay warm. I got to the water tank at 8:30 and took 4 liters. That made for a heavy pack.

As I was leaving, the fog began to clear. It was a beautiful sight.



With the sun shining, I stopped to dry out my sleeping bag and have breakfast- cold mashed potatoes with ramen noodles. It was yummy!



My plan today was to get as close as possible to the Paradise Cafe where I plan to eat tomorrow and then hitch a ride into Idyllwild.

Katherine and her friend Jillian passed me on the trail. We have been "leap-frogging" quite often, and they let me take their picture.



Around noon I caught up with Rasputin and he has decided to stay a day or two in Idyllwild. He might be willing to share a room with me. I took his picture, but he asked that it not be posted on social media.

I caught up with "No Trace" and his wife "Unbreakable". They have hiked the trail before and are doing it again. By the end of the day, I began hiking with them since they keep a good pace and are about the same age as me. This is a picture of them coming up the trail.



As I walked today, I took some pictures of the flowers.



A storm is coming in tonight, and the wind is really picking up. We hiked as far as we could until it started getting dark. I'm in my tent in all my jackets and it is still cold.

I'm camped tonight at mile 149.7.

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

April 21, 2015

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Good luck sleeping through the storm! Beautiful photos today. <3

- [CarrieVanDyck](#)

April 22, 2015

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It's so fun to read your daily report. Thank you for taking time to share with all of us.

- [BobZimmerman](#)

April 22, 2015

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Wait till you hear what happened last night! Geesh!

- [AnneEZJones](#)

April 22, 2015

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What happened last night?!

- [RonZimmerman](#)

April 22, 2015

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You're setting either quite the pace or really stretching out the hours on the trail. 24-25 miles a day is quite impressive!



## Day 7 - Resting in Idyllwild

Wednesday, April 22, 2015

Wednesday, April 22

If you have been following this blog, I mentioned yesterday that last night was "interesting".

Our group had decided to try to hike to the Paradise Cafe last night, but we ran out of energy and time. We camped on a ridge about 3 miles from the cafe.

Since there was a chance of rain, everyone set up their tents. I put rocks on my tent guy lines because there was a strong breeze due to the incoming storm.

The tent was noisy all night as the wind gusts hit it. Needless to say, it was difficult to get much sleep with all the noise.

Around 2 AM, the wind shifted direction and started blowing directly into the entrance of my tent. It was really chilly, so I buried deeper into my sleeping bag and pulled it over my head.

The gusts kept getting stronger and at 4 AM the front guy line snapped letting the tent collapse onto me. Now it was pitch dark and I had a flapping tent on me!

I spent the next hour getting out my spare line, splicing the guy line and re-pitching the tent. This is my campsite the next morning :



Our group broke camp at 6:30 and headed to the Paradise Cafe, which opened at 8. We got there early and had to wait. A number of other hikers showed up too.



We all had a wonderful breakfast and then found out that Casey, a young lady in our group, was having her father pick her up and offered all of us a ride into Idyllwild. We all crammed into the vehicle and were soon in town. "No Trace" and "Unbreakable" rode in back the whole way.



Once in Idyllwild, the problem was finding a place to stay. Everyone wanted a room, and most places had "no vacancy". One of the guys in the group, "T", found a cabin that sleeps 8! And to make it even better, we got a hiker discount: two nights for \$60! This is the place where we're staying:





We get free laundry, showers, wifi, and I have a comfy double bed.

I am amazed at how great everything's turning out.

I walked into town and completed my resupply for the next 5 or 6 days. On the way back, Rasputin waved me over to the local bar and bought me a beer. I ended up staying for another hour as we talked and listened to music. It was wonderful!

On the way back, I passed this statue in town:



Tonight a storm is coming in, bringing rain or mixed rain and snow. We plan to stay another day tomorrow and return to the trail on Saturday when the weather is expected to improve.

When hikers only hike a few miles, we call it a "Nero" - near zero miles for the day. When we don't hike any miles, we call it a "Zero". I'm taking a Nero and a Zero.

It feels good to be clean, dry, and able to rest my feet and sleep in a soft bed. My laundry and resupply purchases are done. Tomorrow we all plan to meet for breakfast at the Red Kettle.

Idyllwild is a great place to rest. I love it!

I'm currently at mile 151.7.

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

April 22, 2015

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Reminds me soooo much of the cabin! So glad to hear you survived the storm and have a lovely place to recover. Love ya! <3

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

April 22, 2015

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I imagine a comfortable bed will be very welcome after being whipped by the wind last night. Enjoy the R&R!

- [SteveE](#)

April 22, 2015

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Happiness comes from how well you handle plan B!  
Enjoy

- AnneEZJones

April 23, 2015

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I'm hoping that your luck continues as the weeks go by. Your poor feet must need a rub or two after 150+ miles!!! My goodness! I don't think I would last 5 miles, especially in the shoes I own!

So has your end date changed at all or is it all part of the plan to be ahead of schedule when the storms or whatever the story might be slows you down to have everything even out?

It also sounds like you have found yourself a trail gang! At the end you guys should all get matching tattoos!!! Have all members start thing of the design now so when fall comes it's already agreed upon!

---dad---? ...do you have any tattoos yet?...just curious.....

Love you Papa, love your little A

- AnneEZJones

April 23, 2015

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Me too! It makes me yearn even more for the big ol log cabin off the 410!

- valoriezimmerman

April 24, 2015

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When are you going?

- AnneEZJones

April 25, 2015

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Were you talking to me, Mama? When am I going? It would have to depend on one of the members that has a key, otherwise I'm not allowed

- valoriezimmerman

April 25, 2015

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You know all you have to do is ask! I always want to go to the cabin.

## Day 8 - What we do on our day off

Thursday, April 23, 2015

Thursday, April 23

A week ago I started my hike. It's amazing that I have already covered 150 miles.

Tomorrow we leave at 8 and will be walking an alternate route on the trail due to a trail closure. It will add an extra day to my hike.

This morning everyone in our cabin walked to town and had breakfast at the Red Kettle restaurant. Everyone uses their trail names and I met several other through hikers.



We all then walked around town but soon realized that most stores did not open until mid-morning.

Back at the cabin. "G'had" wanted to have everyone review the contents of his pack. He ended up sending about 5 pounds of gear back home.





He had also bought some special socks with toes, because he had been suffering from blisters between his toes. Unfortunately his shoes were too tight, so he headed out to buy new shoes.

Others in our group bought resupplies and spent time going through their gear. I got out my tent and repaired my guy line that broke in the wind.

G'had also bought a tarp and I helped him get it set up.



I walked to the store with Unbroken and bought food for a spaghetti dinner tonight. I cooked Italian sausage and helped make a fresh salad. I bought Sangria which went well with the dinner.

I still can't believe how wonderful it has been here in Idyllwild. I have come to really enjoy the people and look forward to getting on the trail again.

One more look at our beautiful cabin:





## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

April 23, 2015

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I'm so glad you had a peaceful day off. Good luck tomorrow! <3

- [AnneEZJones](#)

April 25, 2015

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So far, Dad, I'm very jealous of how much you are doing! Meeting new and great friends. Staying at a beautiful place that was a giant surprise to score. Getting to have a new place to discover and then plan a yummy dinner where everyone pitches in and appreciates everyone else's help and addition to the cause. It's sounding like a fairy tale vacation/journey. But, if I honestly sit here and try to think of absolutely anyone else in the entire world I've met.... It's you. I genuinely hope your entire PCT experience is full of stories like the one you get to write now. I hope you are getting all of it in more detail than you get to put here on your blog. That's another one of your talents I adore, your writing. I still hold dear the stories you wrote when I was a wee one to edit for an English project when I was a homeschooled. Or was that when I was home sick for something else? The story about the straw....there was another story, too!!!..... (It's been a long day.... Sorry if I recall the past like a 97 year old amnesia patient). Anyway, enough of me. I love you, Daddy. Have a wonderful dinner and sleep well for the continued fast pace on the trail.

Love you,  
Your little A

## Day 9 - Fury of the Storm

Friday, April 24, 2015

Friday, April 24

The last time we were on the trail was at highway 74 near the Paradise Cafe. We had gone to Idyllwild due to an approaching storm. We had hoped that today would bring better weather and we could continue our hike.

Unfortunately, the forecast for today was not good with rain likely. Our plan was to get to highway 74 and continue hiking northward.

Most hikers skip this part of the trail because the PCT is closed 10 miles north of highway 74 due to a fire several years ago.



There is, however, an alternate trail which adds 20 miles, but allows through hikers a way to continue on foot without walking the road to Idyllwild.

After a great breakfast at the Red Kettle, Casey's dad drove us to the trail. We were packed like sardines but made it OK.

It was drizzling at the start so we all donned our rain jackets.



As we gained elevation, the wind began to pick up.

By the time we neared the top, the wind was roaring. As the trail crossed several ridges it was difficult to stand upright. We could only see 100 yards ahead due to the blowing fog. By 1:30 We reached the highest point at 6,700 feet.

We quickly headed down, seeking shelter from the bitter cold wind.

We finally reached highway 74 by 4:30 and walked for another two hours to the local campground.

We walked over 20 miles today, even with a late start. We are not sure what to do tomorrow as it is supposed to be even worse weather than today and the trail we need to follow rises to 9,000 feet.

We laughed when we saw this sign on the way down;



I'm in my tent tonight as I listen to the pitter-patter of rain drops. I hope the weather improves or else we might have to take another zero day. Such is life on the trail.

## Comments

- [RonZimmerman](#)

April 24, 2015

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Remember how we used to hike in shorts when it was wet? Nothing like 5 pound wet trousers to lift one's spirits. But I suppose you are wearing synthetics, which can dry quickly, so the need would certainly be less.

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

April 24, 2015

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I'm crossing my fingers for better weather for you. We watched "As it Happens: Pacific Crest Trail" tonight, a documentary about two guys who through hiked the PCT a few years (2011?). You have some awesome country ahead of you...I'm looking forward to hearing about as you go! :) Stay safe and enjoy the moment.

- [AnneEZJones](#)

April 25, 2015

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I hope this storm passes so that we can see the beautiful desert in bloom as you head northward. I am loving every blog post you make and it's becoming the favorite part of my day! Love you, Pops! Stay safe and best wishes to your feeties!

Love you,  
Little a

## Day 10 - Back to Idyllwild

Saturday, April 25, 2015

Saturday, April 25

It rained most of the night during our stay at Hurley Creek campground. Due to the humidity, my sleeping bag was damp on top but still kept me toasty warm.

When it is raining, the challenge is to pack up as much as possible while in the tent and then to pack up the wet tent and carry it on the outside of the pack. That way the wet tent doesn't soak other items in the pack.

Here is our campsite as we packed up.



From the campground, our plan was to walk some trails and back roads until we arrived in Idyllwild.

Since the forecast for today was a 100 percent chance of rain, we wanted to stay indoors again. Gi-Hod was going to hitchhike back to town, so he volunteered to try to reserve beds in the cabin where we stayed a couple days ago.

Our walk back proceeded smoothly, although the wet plants along the trail soaked our pant legs. The trail joined the May Valley road, which was a dirt road that meandered through some of the burn areas that are closed. Occasionally the sky would clear just long enough to see Mt. San Jacinto, the mountain that we will be hiking on tomorrow.





We gained over 2,000 feet but arrived in Idyllwild before noon.

Gi-hod was successful in reserving beds for all of us. It was like coming home.

I set up my tent to dry outside and hung my sleeping bag inside to dry it off. Unfortunately it began to rain, so it brought my tent inside to dry by the heater.

At noon we all headed to the Red Kettle for lunch. By now it was really raining hard, and there is a high wind warning for the mountains. Everyone is so thankful that we are able to sleep inside tonight and had decided NOT to hike further today. The cabin is surrounded by puddles and rain is pounding on the roof.



Tonight we are having root beer floats. Everyone is checking their gear and getting ready.



Early tomorrow morning we head out back to the trail. Hopefully the worst of the weather is behind us now.

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

April 25, 2015

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Sorry for getting this posted so late. Bad timing today, as we had the annual Linuxfest party tonight, this year, sponsored by Microsoft! Will wonders ever cease. I'm glad you are enjoying your time even in the storm. <3

- [AnneEZJones](#)

April 28, 2015

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So how did day eleven go with the elevation climb? How was the weather?  
Sounds like you've gained good friendships this first leg of your journey; how different are all of your schedules look like? Will you be leaving them in the dust or are there a few crazy fast pacers like you in your new friends?  
Last question and then I'll leave you alone and stop with the pestering questions.  
How has the first 150+ miles gone compared to what you were thinking they would be. How is that comparison? Just curious. I'm a little surprised that you are with a larger group, I imagined you meet people for a day and leave them to a dusty sunrise. I love that you get to let loose and go with what nature is gonna let you have. And I don't think I'd turn down many root beer floats in my day but plain ol' beer sounds much more satisfying after any kind of walking (be it walking to the car to go to the grocery store or walking 20+ miles in the Southern Californian desert.... I want straight up beers until I float

I love you Daddy,  
Little A

(PS we took our VW (we are leasing) and had to get a new car since the 2012 lease is up and came home with a 2015 white Golf. Very pretty car, turbocharged engine but will STILL get near 40 miles per gallon even though it has the turbo charged engine. And it doesn't have to get a higher grade gas because of it either! Big plus!! I can really feel the extra gidden-up I'll take a picture and either text it to you or see if I can get something on here.

Oh! One last thing, Dad! The Mariners beat the Texas Rangers 3-1 so we are still hanging in and right in the thick of everything! Gotta keep you updated Once again, I blabbed on and on but for real this time I'm saying goodnight (or good morning) depending upon when you read this. Again, again, again.... I LOVE YOU PAPA! Hope to have a new update soon! Stay safe and happy

# Day 11 - San Jacinto Mountain

Tuesday, April 28, 2015

Sunday, April 26

I'm back on the trail again!

We left our cabin just after 6 AM. Here is our group:



Left to right- Gi-Hod, Mr T, Unbreakable, No Trace, Casey, Bobaroo

Many hikers get a ride to the trail that leads back to the Pacific Crest Trail. We decided, however, to walk to the trailhead. That involved a 4 1/2 mile walk up the Ernie Maxwell trail which brought us to the parking lot for the Devils Slide trail.



The Devils Slide trail switch backs up the mountain for 2 1/2 miles joining the PCT. So, before we even got back to the PCT, we had hiked 7 miles, all uphill.

The upper part of Mt San Jacinto was covered in snow as a result of last night's storm.



As we hiked up the Devils Slide trail, we eventually ran into snow. At the top, the entire trail was snow covered.



Fortunately the trail was easy to follow as it climbed up the mountain. The views were spectacular and the trees were covered in ice.



By mid morning, Mr T was doing the navigation. We wanted to follow the PCT, but there was an alternate trail that was 1 1/2 miles longer but took you very near the top of Mt San Jacinto. Unfortunately we ended up on the alternate trail and didn't discover our mistake until we were several miles up the trail.

The rest of our group took the PCT, so we were split up as we hiked today.



By 11 AM we reached a trail junction at 9,700 feet where there were a crowd of tourists all taking pictures and hiking toward the summit. They had taken a tram from the valley.



We headed up the trail and found that the slushy snow was melting in the trail, causing us to slip and slide in the icy water. Our shoes and pant legs were soaked.

The trail rose up and up and up, finally topping out at 10,550 feet. There was a short side trail to the summit, but my legs were so tired that I couldn't do it. It made me cry.

The trail back down to the PCT was really slippery, made more so by the tons of ice that was cascading from all of the trees as it warmed in the sun.

We finally made it back to the PCT and then walked through icy trails across Fuller Ridge. The trail then descends rapidly. Tomorrow I will be in the desert again. This is a view of the desert from the trail:



I hurried as fast as I could to try to catch up with the group, but ran out of steam at 6 PM.

I am camped tonight at mile 194.



## Day 12 - Windy Desert

Wednesday, April 29, 2015

Monday, April 27

Although it was a clear night, the wind picked up at 10 pm. There were very strong gusts, but fortunately I was protected by hearty trees. In addition, I was cowboy camping so there was no worry about my tent.

Since I am separated from our group, I decided to get up at 4:30 to try to catch up with them. I was on the trail at 5 using my headlamp to find the trail. Unfortunately I couldn't spot their campsite, so I thought they may have hiked further last night.

The sunrise was spectacular. I could see all of the lights from Palm Springs.



The trail drops steadily towards the desert floor. About half way down this is the view of Mt San Jacinto.



The trail led to a drinking fountain, one of the reliable sources of water. I was down to less than one liter of water, so I finished it off and then took 3 more.

The trail headed to the valley floor and it started to warm up. It was supposed to be in the mid-eighties today. This is the view of the valley and the mountains that I will climb later this afternoon.



The trail goes under Interstate highway 10. I decided to stop at a popular trail angel's house that is just off the trail. They are named 'Ziggy and the Bear'. I signed in, got some fig bars, restocked my water, and headed up the trail.

This area is very windy, and there were many wind turbines on the hills.



The rest of the afternoon I climbed the trail into the mountains. There were more wind turbines on the hills that made odd noises as the blades turned.



On the way up I saw this cute heart just before a climb on the trail.



By dinner time I got my first glimpse of the Whitewater River.



In addition, I caught up with Casey! She too had become separated from the group and had not seen any of the others since yesterday. We stopped for water at the river.



I made mashed potatoes and noodles for dinner.

We decided to camp here tonight at mile 220.2. (Did you notice I passed 200 miles?)

## Day 13 - Back in the Pines

Wednesday, April 29, 2015

Tuesday, April 28

I had the best sleep last night. I think it was because it was a warm night. Plus, there was the sound of the Whitewater River.

I got on the trail at 6 this morning.

My problem today was a blister that developed on the bottom of my foot just below my second toe. I popped it last night, but it still hurt all day. I decided to change socks more frequently and wash the dirty socks at stream crossings.

I knew the hike today was going to be tough since the trail climbs back up into the mountains. The trail followed Mission Creek and crossed it multiple times. This was good in that there was a ready supply of water. But, with a blister hurting and a trail that kept going higher and higher, my pace was really slow. In addition it was warm with little wind.

This is a view of the mountains I would be climbing.



By midday, Casey caught up with me and headed up the trail. I stopped for dinner at 3:30 and filled up with water since the next source is 16 miles away.

I hiked until 6 PM. A 12 hour hiking day covering about 22 miles. I climbed over 4,600 feet today.

Here is my campsite:



My view as the sun sets:



Before going to bed I popped the blister again. I'll check it tomorrow morning, but it feels better already.

I am camped at 7,200 feet at mile 242.2. It's going to be cold tonight!

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

April 29, 2015

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Sorry it took so long to get these last two published. Sounds like everything besides the blister is great! I'll soon send you a couple of boxes. Take care of those feet!

Love ya,

Valorie

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

April 29, 2015

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Wow, you are making tracks again. <3

- [AnneEZJones](#)

May 01, 2015

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Hi Dad! Sounds like you are fully charged up again and on a steady diet of miles! Are you still hiking ten hours a day?



Sort of a small world out there... I was saying hi to Jason's Mom, Brunie, and she and Jim were out near Idyllwild this last week! It was during that storm that you all went back and stayed in that cabin for the second time! And she mentioned that she had been reading about your trip on Facebook. I'm not sure if your blog here is the same postings as Facebook (I told her to look for your blog link just incase it wasn't)...? But I thought it was so funny that you and my in laws were in the same few miles of this little planet of ours. Oh, Brunie says that she checks for updates nearly daily. So Dad, you have an extended fan base out there! And!! One last thing! When you get near Wrightwood, that's where Sandy (J's brother) and MJ (Sandy's wife) live. And they both commute to the city everyday. Crazy Californians! J/k. It's really pretty up there, that's where we spent Christmas day and night this past year. Okay, enough from me, I love you Pops! Stay well, hydrated, and happy!  
Little A

## Day 14 - Trail to Big Bear

Wednesday, April 29, 2015

Wednesday, April 29

Last night it was cold. Fortunately there was no wind. My water bottle didn't freeze, but I am sure it was near freezing.

The moonlight last night was amazing. I could have hiked by the light of the moon.

I was on the trail by 5:45. It was the perfect trail for high miles. By that I mean it was mostly flat or down hill.

This area has quite a number of Western Junipers. Their bark is very unusual.



At about 10 AM I passed the Predators in Action cages containing grizzly bears, lions, wolves, and other large predators. The company raises and trains the exotic animals to perform on film and television. I thought it was rather sad to see them caged like that.

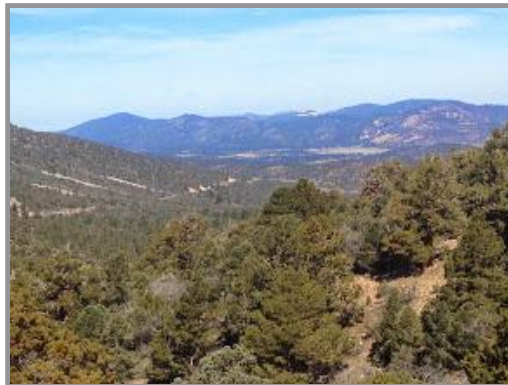


Also, I realized that I had covered 11 miles already, and it might be possible to make it to Big Bear today, rather than tomorrow.

At one trail junction I saw a sign inviting hikers to a trail angel's house called "Mama and Papa Smirfs".



By noon I could see ahead to Big Bear, and knew it would be possible to get there today.



A short time later, I came down the trail and found "Rasputin"! He was the friend who invited me for beers in Idyllwild. I thought he was several days ahead, but had stayed in town a couple of days. I invited him to come to Big Bear, but he didn't need to resupply.

We made it to highway 18 by 3:30. I called "Mama Smirf", and she picked me up within ten minutes.

They offered me a shower, laundry, a great place to sleep in a huge outside tent, and are going to feed me dinner and breakfast.

It is so nice to be clean wearing clean clothes. This is what it looks like from where I am sleeping:



Tomorrow they offered to take me into town to do my resupply shopping.

I have now made it to mile 266. I hiked 24 miles today.

## Comments

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

April 30, 2015

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Oscar has enjoyed following you through the start of your journey. Oscar says, "that's a lot of hiking to do in 14 days!" Have fun out there--looks like beautiful & varied country you're trekking through!

- [AnneEZJones](#)

May 01, 2015

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24 is the best number besides 42! You ended at a great milestone!  
It is sad to see that caged bear. I hope they give it lots of cuddles.... Does a bear in captivity that gets a steady diet still hibernate? Curious... Probably do, huh?  
You might have already passed Sandy and MJ's place!! I think that you walked almost the entire length of my Full Commute! I can barely stand to DRIVE that many miles!!!!!!  
Let alone WALK THEM!

a

## Day 15 - Back to the trail from Big Bear

Friday, May 01, 2015

Thursday, April 30

Mama and Papa Smirf fixed us a wonderful breakfast of eggs, sausage, potatoes and waffles. They then took us grocery shopping at Von's in Big Bear. I found everything I needed for the next five days on the trail. This is a picture of Mama and Papa Smirf.



I really enjoyed my stay here. I just wish more hikers would pitch in and help. I swept and emptied garbage, but there was a lot more that needed to be done.

We left for the trail at 10:45 and I was hiking by 11.

The trail had only one climb of about 800 feet and then was up and down as it wound through pine forests.



There often were areas with pretty flowers.





This is the first time I had seen a Joshua tree. The Joshua tree produces showy blooms which are pollinated by yucca moths, who lay their eggs in the flowers. The moth deliberately pollinates the tree so that seeds will develop, which in turn will feed the caterpillars. Some Joshua trees were much bigger than the one in my photo.



As I crested a ridge, I could see Big Bear lake, Sugarloaf Mountain, and San Geronio mountain.



Today was the first time that I encountered a large rattle snake beside the trail. I had seen other snakes before as they slithered away. But this one was coiled and ready to strike. I tried to get a picture but it blended into the shadows.



I made a huge mistake today in buying my resupplies. I packed way too many munchies and my pack was way too heavy. I tried all of the adjustments but it became very uncomfortable. I barely made it to my campsite by 6:30.

I ate a big dinner and will eat some snacks for breakfast.

I am camped at Holcomb Creek, elevation 6,490 feet.

Drat...there a mosquitoes out and I am cowboy camping. I hate that high pitched whine as they look for exposed flesh!

I am at PCT mile 286.1.

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

May 01, 2015

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Heh, I'm not surprised you forgot the Joshua Trees that my parents had in the front planters of their house. The poor things looked so out-of-place. And illegal - no idea what they were thinking!

I'm still worried that you are moving too fast. Please take time to enjoy your hike! I went back and changed all the big photos on past posts to 600x600. What about the little ones?

- [AnneEZJones](#)

May 01, 2015

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I wanna come join you on the trail for about an hour. Then go home. Everyday you are doing these nutty miles!

I'd like to send the "Smurfs" a thank you card and maybe a bottle of wine for taking everyone in all of the time! What a cool couple! Did you get their address?

a

- [AnneEZJones](#)

May 01, 2015

---

Just looked at the map again to see where Wrightwood is and you are still a few days out. But I do know they have a little post office there. It's a little town, very pretty area!

a

- [MarshaEdwardsGoodwin](#)

May 02, 2015

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Hi Bob! What an amazing experience you're having. I look for your post everyday with great anticipation. Thanks so much for sharing. You have a lot of friends out here rooting for you & wishing we could help share the load!

## Day 16 - Hard day on easy trail

Sunday, May 03, 2015

Friday, May 1

I woke up at 5 AM and had a "come to God" session with my trail snacks. I laid out 5 days worth of snacks. The extra ones got the axe.

The sunrise was spectacular.



I was on the trail by 6 AM. It was an easy day in that the trail was mostly downhill. Unfortunately I am having lower back pain, so I have to stop to rest every 45 minutes. That makes for slow miles.

I don't think I mentioned it before, but "No Trace" had been helping me adjust my pack. He noticed that my pack hangs crooked on my back; kind of lopsided. He contacted ULA customer service for me, and I got an email from them asking about my problem. No Trace is convinced that there was a manufacturing error. I replied to their email and hope there might be a way to fix it. Anyway, I wonder if that might be why my lower back hurts?

The trail today wound through miles and miles of burnt forest. It is so sad to see so many trees charred and blackened.

I did see a large jackrabbit.



Later on I saw a bush with pretty yellow blossoms.



Sometimes I see a beautiful butterfly.





By noon I passed the 300 mile mark.



Eventually the trail started following Deep Creek, which flows through a narrow canyon for 14 miles. A hiker several years ago fell to his death on this section of the trail, so I carefully watched my footing. This is a view of the creek from the trail.



I stopped to cook my dinner where a bridge crosses over the creek. I try to do my cooking where there is water so I don't have to carry water for cooking. This is a view of the creek and bridge.



I would have liked to have made it to the Deep Creek Hot Springs, but there is no camping allowed within a mile of the hot springs. This is a "clothes optional" hot springs, so I will likely get there early tomorrow morning. Perhaps a soak in the warm water will help my back.

I am camped tonight by a lovely stream among huge boulders. Two of the guys that I met in Big Bear are camped here too...Marathon John and Lucky.

I am at PCT mile 306.1, elevation 3,697 feet.

## Day 17 - Hot Springs, Dams & Lakes

Sunday, May 03, 2015

Saturday, May 2

I was back on the trail by 5:45 and watched the sun rise over Deep Creek. In just two miles I reached Deep Creek hot springs.

The heated water runs into pools and eventually into Deep Creek. Since it was only 7 AM, there was little activity in the pools. This is what I saw as I slipped into the hottest pool.



This guy looked to be stoned on something and probably had been in the pool all night. The water was like a bathtub. I was careful not to put my head under water since there have been reports of brain eating amoebas that can infect a person through the nasal cavities. I soaked in the pool for half an hour and then dried off.

This is another pool with another guy who appeared to have been in the water for a long time. He took the "no clothes" option.



Sorry folks, no X-rated photos of crowds of naked people to share.

The trail continued to follow Deep Creek down the canyon. At one point the trail crossed over the creek on a rainbow-colored bridge.



The bridge made me think of the fabled "Rainbow Bridge" where all of my pet-friends will be waiting for me.

As I neared the end of the canyon I rounded a bend to see the Mojave Forks Dam.





The trail eventually led to the base of the dam and crossed Deep Creek. The creek finally runs into a tunnel at the base of the dam where it appears to enter an aqueduct.



For much of the afternoon the trail followed the contours of the hillsides in what I would call the "green desert".



At one point I could see an aqueduct and irrigated pasture with cattle.





Soon I rounded another corner to be astonished by this sight.



It was a massive dam of rock and concrete holding in the waters of Silverwood Lake, 73,000 acre feet of water. The water in Silverwood Lake comes from the eastern aqueduct that crosses the Mojave Desert. The water is pumped up to the lake and then passes through the San Bernardino Tunnel. It emerges on the south side of the mountains at the Devil Canyon Power Station.



After walking to the far end of the lake, I stopped at the Cleghorn Picnic Area where I fixed mashed potatoes with cheese and Fritos for dinner. I filled up with water and headed up the trail for a mile where I made camp for the night.

Today was a great day: no back pain and no issues with blisters!

By the way, this is what my feet look like every time I change socks.



I am camped tonight at PCT mile 330.3, elevation 3586 feet.

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

May 03, 2015

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I hope the hot water helped your back and those poor feet! <3

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

May 03, 2015

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Congratulations on 300! Sorry this one was published so late. I forgot it was my night with my daddy. I hope the fixed pack and snack give-away will help your back. <3

- [AnneEZJones](#)

May 03, 2015

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If you were home and it was back in the days when I was still living at home, I can only imagine there might be a request for a foot rub? Maybe even with lotion cause those puppies look like they are about to start barking!

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

May 03, 2015

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If you got creative with some masking tape, you might be able to write a message on your feet by covering some small portions of the mesh on your shoes! I'm glad to hear that your back wasn't an issue yesterday. Enjoy the trek today!

- [Nickki](#)

May 03, 2015

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Wow, 300 already!! Good for you and beautiful pictures as always.

## Day 18 - McDonald's & a little rest

Sunday, May 03, 2015

Sunday, May 3

This is a special day today because it is my wife's birthday. HAPPY BIRTHDAY Valorie!

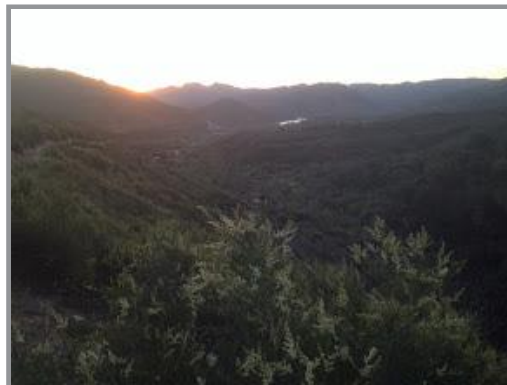
For those of you who don't know, Valorie is my editor and publisher for this blog. Without her, I don't think I could manage.

The problem with blogging from the trail is that I can't see the actual photo sizes. Everything looks great on my little phone, but they would look awful on another device. I send her my draft and she fixes the photos and checks my spelling & grammar. I think she is doing a wonderful job!



It looked to be a full moon last night. The "down side" was that I couldn't see the stars until the moon set in the early hours of the morning. And since I was camped in a little ravine, it got really cold by morning.

It took me less than 1/2 hour to pack up and I hit the trail by 5:45. It is always awesome to see the sun coming up over the mountains.



The grass-lined trail was especially pretty in the morning light.



The trail climbed over a few low hills and continued through the green desert. After a couple of hours of hiking I came to this sign telling about the endangered Mountain Yellow-Legged frogs in this area. Later on, I will have to detour around an area where the frogs live.



Once the sun was overhead, I came around a corner to see this snake on the trail. I had to prod it with my trekking pole before it slithered away.



By 10 AM I reached interstate highway 15. This sign reminded me that I only have 2,296 more miles to go.



Interstate highway 15 is significant to hikers on this trail because there is a McDonald's restaurant less than 1/2 mile up the road. There's even a sign to remind us!



I got there just in time to order a deluxe breakfast.

One problem I noticed today while hiking is that my blister has begun to hurt again. In addition, the next 25 miles of trail have no reliable sources for water. That means that I will have to carry about 5 liters of water (10 pounds) and I was worried about hiking the steep trail in the hot sun.

So, to give myself some time to rest, I decided to take the rest of the day off and got a room at the Best Western hotel.





I did my laundry, showered, and got everything ready for a very early start tomorrow morning.

Funny thing, "Rasputin" is staying here too, as is "Marathon John".

I am currently at PCT mile 341.8.

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

May 03, 2015

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Thank you, thank you! Really no work required on this blog beyond adding tags. All the photos were already small. I hope a half-day was enough to heal that blister though. Best of luck tomorrow, Bob. I love you. <3

- [MarshaEdwardsGoodwin](#)

May 04, 2015

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Happy birthday Valorie! In honor of you, it was a lovely day today!

- [MichaelIrving](#)

May 04, 2015

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Try the app BlogTouchPro for Blogger. Much better than the Blogger app or the BlogPress app.  
-GoalTech

## Day 19 - Up into the mountains again

Monday, May 04, 2015

Monday, May 4

Day to day travel on the Pacific Crest Trail through the desert is highly influenced by the availability of water. The trail north of Cajon Pass has a dry stretch that is over 22 miles long. Before leaving Cajon Pass, I took 5 1/2 liters of water to get me to the next reliable water source. I was carrying 11 pounds of water!

My strategy for this section of the trail was to carry a Subway sandwich (no cooking water required) and I planned to leave very early in the morning to avoid hiking in the hot sun (requires less drinking water).

I left the Best Western at 2:30 AM and was back on the trail by 3 AM. This is the first time that I have hiked with my headlamp. It was odd just seeing a tiny spotlight of the trail as I passed through tunnels under the interstate highway and the railroad.

Occasionally I would see the red reflection from the eyes of some creature before it disappeared into the night. Once I almost stepped on a dove that appeared to be sleeping on the trail!

The sunrise was spectacular.



Morning sunrise above Cajon Pass  
As I followed the trail higher, I noticed that fog had filled the valley.



Fog fills the valley below

This section of the trail rises in elevation continuously for almost 20 miles! It was a real test of my through-hiker trail legs.

The starting elevation was 2,950 feet at the tunnel under the freeway at Cajon Pass. The highest point reached twenty miles up the trail was 8,400 feet. That's a gain of 5,450 feet (over a mile)!

Another strategy I used this time was to drink a liter of water every 5 miles. That meant that I stopped about every two hours and drank a liter of water whether I was thirsty or not. I did this because I didn't want to carry extra water weight. My pack got lighter the further I walked. The strategy worked well.

By late morning I reached an area that had been burned in 2009. One of the plants that tends to grow after a fire is called the "Poodle Dog" bush. The leaves of this plant cause severe skin irritation if touched, similar to poison oak.



Poodle Dog Bush - causes severe skin irritation similar to Poison Oak  
It was difficult sometimes to avoid it because it often grows right next to the trail.

By 1 PM the trail finally leveled off at 8,400 feet. There were marvelous views of the desert to the east.



View to the east at the top of the mountain

By this time I realized that I could make it to highway 2, the road into Wrightwood. I called the Pines Motel from the trail and reserved a room.

I made it to the highway at 3:30. A car was coming, I stuck out my thumb, and they stopped! Wow. What good luck.

The man lived near Wrightwood and he gave me a tour of the town. I plan on staying two days to rest my feet and to gather my resupply for the next section.

I am at PCT mile 374.5.  
I walked 32.5 miles today!

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

May 04, 2015

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Wow! 32 miles in a day is just amazing. Especially carting all that water along. So glad you found a way to drink enough to stay in good health. And good for you for taking days off. <3

## Day 20 - Wrightwood Resupply

Tuesday, May 05, 2015

Tuesday, May 5

It seems odd to wake up in the morning and take a shower even though I'm not filthy dirty!

Here is a view of the Pines Motel, the place where I am staying.



As a piece of trivia, I am staying at a place less than a mile from the San Andreas Fault. The mountains near here are rising at an average rate of about 0.1 inches per year, or 8000' per million years, making them one of the fastest-growing mountain ranges in the world. Hope there are no earthquakes while I am here!

Although this is a "rest day", there is a lot to do.

The first thing I do is to charge up my battery backup and iPhone. I also charge my camera.

I then take everything (I mean EVERYTHING) out of my pack. Often there's something that needs to be done that I'll forget if I don't look at it. Do I have toilet paper? Do I need Ziplock bags? Am I running low on olive oil or bleach to treat my water? You get the picture.

This is everything laid out.





Once I see everything, I start making a list of what I need. I know from my hiking plan that I need 5 days of food to get to Agua Dulce, my next resupply town. You can see that I had one day of food left, so I need to buy 4 days of food. The same is true for the snacks.

I headed over to the local grocery store to shop.



Here is the food after I made purchases at the grocery store.



You can tell I like Idahoan mashed potatoes!

In addition to buying food, a town stop means ENJOYING town food. For breakfast, I went to the Grizzly Cafe. Their Denver Omelette with potatoes and pancakes was delicious. The place had a moose head that moved and blinked its eyes. Kinda odd...creepy?



For lunch, I returned to the Yodeler for a hamburger and frosty beer. They have a good IPA, although it was a little pricey.



Tonight, in honor of Cinco de Mayo, I had Mexican food. The first margarita was just 5 cents!



At midday I called the customer service representative for my ULA backpack, and discussed the problem I am having with my lopsided pack. Chris, the customer rep, walked me through the checklist of potential issues, and he is going to send a smaller hip belt to the Action KOA campground which is 3 or 4 days away. He thinks that the smaller belt might solve the problem by allowing the pack to better transfer its' load to my hips. The KOA campground is within a quarter mile of the trail at mile 444. I hope that it works!

My last task for the day was to review my maps to determine how much water I needed to carry. It appears that I will need about 3 liters to get me to the next reliable water source. I know where the reliable water sources are from the PCT water report (on-line) and from my PCT Gutthooks iPhone app.

It also looks like I will have an upcoming detour due to the endangered frogs.

I'll try to get back on the trail after breakfast tomorrow, hopefully by 9 AM. The Pines Motel offers rides back to the trail, so I signed up for a ride at 8:30.

It is strange how taking a day off makes me want to stay longer. The town acts like a vortex trying to trap me here. But, the trail calls, and I must go!

So you can see a "zero day" in town takes a lot of time and planning. Rest day? Not really!

## Comments

- Nickki

May 06, 2015

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Glad you got to celebrate Cinco de Mayo :) The town looks nice!! Be safe out there!

- Ray

May 06, 2015

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Hi Bob! I've been keeping up with your journey and looks like you are doing great. In typical ME fashion, your planning skills are impeccable. Although, your recent meal reload appears to have some Marshawn Lynch influence. I bet them Skittles do the trick when you are making it up one of the steep climbs.

- AnneEZJones

May 08, 2015

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You certainly made more (and saw more!) than we did when we passed through and spent our 2 days there!! If I recall those two days I was there I think I slept at least 36 of them! ;)

I'm really glad you took an extra day to rest, especially after the 30+ miles day

## Day 21 - Mt Baden Powell

Friday, May 08, 2015

Wednesday, May 6

I arose at 5:45 and took advantage of the shower in my room at Wrightwood one last time. At 7, I had breakfast at the Grizzly Cafe. I took a picture of the moving-blinking moose head.



I gathered my pack and got a ride back to the trail from the folks at the Pines Motel. At the trail head getting ready to start was "Lucky", who I met in Big Bear, and another fellow named "Cool Breeze".



I knew today was going to be a challenge because the trail climbed up from highway 2, Vincent Gap (elevation 6,667) to the top of Mt. Baden-Powell (elevation 9,406). The elevation gain takes place in just 3.7 miles.

Mount Baden-Powell is the fourth highest peak in the San Gabriel mountains. On the way up I could see the valleys to the west covered in clouds.





As I neared the top, I got to see a 1500-year-old twisted limber pine. The tree is named the Wally Waldron Tree, in honor of a scout leader who popularized the trail.



This is a view of the trail to the top from the Wally Waldron tree.



Several minutes later I was on top. I signed the trail register and read the monument dedicated to scouting. There were a number of hikers on the top, including Katherine and Jillian, who I met way back at Barrel Springs. Here is a group picture taken at the top.



From the top of the mountain the trail followed the mountain ridges. At one of my breaks I took a selfie in front of gnarly old trees.



Almost everyone stopped at the Little Jimmy spring for water. It was 3:30, so I cooked my dinner.

The trail drops down to highway 2 again, and we decided to do a 5 mile road walk to the Buckhorn Campground. The campground is not on the PCT, but is part of an alternate route around the endangered frogs.

On the way we went through two tunnels.



We arrived at the campground at 6:30 and shared the cost of a campsite with water, a picnic table and a bear box. I set up my tent because there is a 20% chance of rain.

Buckhorn Campground is at elevation 6,626 feet. I'm currently not on the PCT as I am in the middle of the "endangered yellow frog" detour. It is in the 30's tonight. I estimate I walked 27 miles today.

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

May 08, 2015

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Moose head is creepy! I'm typing on Rory's MacBook, in Hartford! It's supposed to be 82 today. How are your feet doing, Bob?

Love and kisses, Valorie <3

- [AnneEZJones](#)

May 08, 2015

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Hi Mom! Hi Colin! Hi Rory! (Thanks for letting my mom use your MacBook)

That Wally tree looks so cool!

27 miles, Dad! Yeah, like mom said "how are your feet?!"

Love you, a

- [AnneEZJones](#)

May 08, 2015

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Oh mom! It was 75 today and supposed to be warmer and clear all weekend!

## Day 22 - Desert Storm

Friday, May 08, 2015

Thursday, May 7

Last night it was really cold. There was a foggy mist for much of the night and then it cleared by morning. I was wearing all of my jackets except my raincoat.

The challenge today was to get back on the trail. I packed up and left Buckhorn campground at 6:15. I find it hard to hike with a group, camp with them, and then just leave by myself in the morning. But, that's just the way it is. Everyone hikes their own hike.

I decided to walk another two miles on the highway and then take the PCT where it crosses the road. After walking for mile, I noticed I passed another milestone.



Yes, I have now hiked 400 miles.

I noticed these unusual plants growing under some pine trees.



Of course the desert is still in bloom. These yellow flowers seem to love to grow in the sand.



By mid morning I entered a burn zone. There are signs warning about the dangers during high winds. Trees that were burnt but still standing can suddenly topple over.



The photo below is what I often see along the trail.



All day long I was trying to find the right combination of jackets to stay warm. Just wearing my raincoat over my shirt was too cold. And often wearing my flannel and raincoat was too warm. I ended up wearing the flannel coat with just two buttons buttoned.

By late morning the wind really started blowing and unfortunately the trail was heading higher into the mountains. I could see a storm was on its way.





I tried to hurry along the trail, but often had to pause when a huge gust of wind whipped through the burnt trees. I could see them swaying back and forth. It was a good thing I was cautious because I saw a huge tree sway, snap, and crash down the mountain just 100 feet in front of me! This is a picture of the area where it happened.



My goal today was to get to the Mill Creek Fire Station where there is a reliable source of water. I arrived just after 3PM and the wind was howling. I founded a semi-sheltered spot behind the bathroom and cooked dinner.

I decided to carry 5 liters of water tomorrow because the next reliable source of water is the Action KOA campground, about 25 miles down the trail.

I headed up the trail looking for a place to camp since the clouds were thickening. It is supposed to rain tomorrow. I found a spot about a mile up the trail and fought the wind as I set up my tent.



The wind is gusty. A minute ago it was hailing. It is going to be a long night. I hope my tent doesn't blow away!

I am camped at PCT mile 419.8. The elevation here is 5,221 feet.

## Day 23 - Reunion at the KOA

Saturday, May 09, 2015

Friday, May 8

I survived the snow and wind storm. I was up several times during the night to tap the sides of the tent to knock the snow off. The tent stakes held through the night.

I waited to see how long the storm would last. By 7:45 I decided to pack up. Here is the view from my tent when I woke up.



I headed up the trail. There were no other tracks on the trail except for those of a coyote and a small deer. The wind had died down and there was just low clouds.

Within a few miles I came to the part of the trail where there is a heavy infestation of poodle dog bush. There's an alternative which is a road walk. I chose the road which also had the advantage of no snow. Unfortunately I couldn't see much because of the clouds.



I soon came to a memorial for firefighters who lost their lives fighting the Station Fire in 2009. This fire burned for two months and was the largest wildfire in the history of Los Angeles County.



The road walk rejoined the PCT at Messenger Flats Campground.



My goal today was to reach the KOA campground in Action. Along the way I caught up with Allison, a lady I met back in Idyllwild.

I also saw some very pretty wild flowers.



By 4PM I finally spotted the campground in the distance.



At the campground, I paid for a camping spot, a shower and a load of laundry. When I was setting up my tent, I turned around and was amazed to see No Trace and Unbreakable! Also camped nearby are Cool Breeze, Jillian, Katherine and the lady I met on the trail, Allison.

No Trace found a small backpack belt in the hiker-box and put it on my pack. The belt from ULA never arrived. The smaller belt WORKED!



Tomorrow I stop in Aqua Dulce to resupply. I'm so happy to have No Trace and Unbreakable here again.

I'm currently at PCT mile 444.6. The elevation here is 2,220 feet.

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

May 10, 2015

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Glad you were able to get this published without my help. Google locked me out of Rory's computer. And glad you met up with your friends!



## Day 24 - Aqua Dulce & Vasquez Rocks

Tuesday, May 12, 2015

Saturday, May 9

The Action KOA campground offers lots of services to hikers. However, the hiking community is only a small part of their business. Last night it was very difficult to sleep. First, all of the PCT hikers were bunched together, so naturally there was talking later than usual. Second, we were camped right next to the highway, so we heard traffic noise. Third, there is a train track on the far side of the camp. The train passed by three times during the night and, of course, had to blow its horn. Finally, there were late arriving car campers who made noise until 1AM. Needless to say, I didn't get much sleep.

I packed up when I heard No Trace and Unbreakable packing. They left about 15 minutes ahead of me. This was the PCT hiker tents as I left.



I caught up with them within a half hour and I then hiked on ahead. There were some fantastic rock formations.

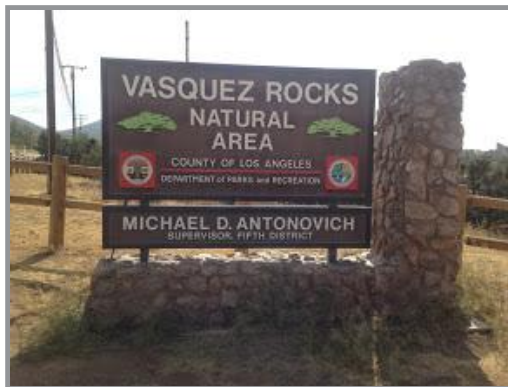


After a while I saw a freeway in the distance. It was interstate highway 14. The trail went under the freeway through a tunnel.



It was so dark in the tunnel that I couldn't see my feet or the path. I stubbed my toe on a large rock. Fortunately no permanent damage was done.

The treat for today was to visit the Vasquez Rocks National Area.



The rock formations were astounding.



Upon leaving the Vasquez rocks, Thea trail goes right through the town of Aqua Dulce. I needed to stop at the store there to resupply.



I needed 5 days of food to get me to Tehachapi. I had a list and the store had everything I was looking for. After packing it up, I walked across the street and had a hearty breakfast. No Trace and Unbreakable arrived just as I was leaving.

The trail followed the highway for several miles and then headed back into the mountains. This is what the trail often looks like as it climbs into the mountains.



I met three new hikers today. Ciera camped at the KOA last night and we leap frogged each other most of the day. She is in her twenties and lives in Colorado. She carries a mandolin and likes to sing.

At a spring, I met Dino DNA and Etch-a-sketch. They too are younger and are strong hikers.

By 5:30 I was tired so I stopped, made camp, and fixed dinner. I'm cowboy camping tonight and hope to get a good nights sleep.

I am at PCT mile 468.5. The elevation is 3,987 feet.

## Day 25 - Casa de Luna

Tuesday, May 12, 2015

Sunday, May 10

Cowboy camping was so much better than sleeping at the KOA campground. I slept well.

There was a heavy dew last night, so my sleeping bag was wet on top. I was going to recharge my phone one last time, but my charger was out of power! This has never happened before so I was worried that perhaps it had gotten wet with dew.

I left camp at 5:45 and headed towards the San Francisquito Valley Road, about 10 miles away. If my battery backup has died, then I would have to figure out how to replace it. I knew that Casa de Luna was a short way down the road, so I decided to go there to try to recharge it.

When I got to the road, Terry Anderson, the owner of Casa de Luna, was waiting! There were three other hikers who also got a ride.

Casa de Luna is very unique. Hikers camp behind the house in a manzanita forest. This was my campsite.



There were little signs along the path. I took the high road.



I liked this sign on the gate.



And there was this sign too.



I plugged in my battery backup and let it charge all afternoon. I guess I had just used all the power!

More hikers arrived during the day and there was quite a crowd.

I helped out by washing dishes from the previous day.

There was plenty of beer so everyone was having a good time. For dinner they served a large taco salad. Yummy!

I am camped at Casa de Luna at PCT mile 478,6.

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

May 12, 2015

Sorry for the wait. Google finally let me into blogger to edit. Dunno about gmail yet. NYC was great, if exhausting, so today is a restful day close to home. We may take a picnic dinner out to the beach if the weather stays good. And then home tomorrow! It sounds like you are really settling into trail life. I love you. <3

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

May 12, 2015



Looks like a cool spot!

- AnneEZJones

May 12, 2015

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Are manzanitas trees?

Sleep well. Can hardly believe you are nearing 500 miles in four small weeks! Truly, Dad, you are amazing!

Love you!

a

PS- The Mariners hit 6 home runs and had 15 hits tonight in a 11-4 win over the San Diego Padres! The Mariners are now 4 game winning streak!! 15-17 on the season :)

## Day 26 - Road-walk to Hiker Town & beyond

Tuesday, May 12, 2015

Monday, May 11

Casa de Luna was really fun! Such a great bunch of people!

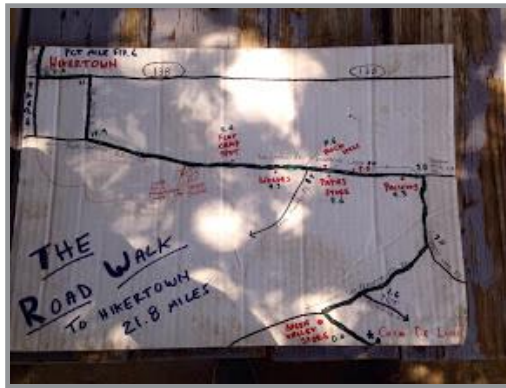
I packed up and Terri took me and Fix It on her first run back to the trail at 6:45.



Before we left, there was one last photo of the folks that arrived yesterday. Terri always gets a smile from the group as she "moons" them just as the picture is taken. In this one, a young lady mooned her back!



My hike today consisted mostly of road walking. The PCT has a large section that is closed due to the Powerhouse Fire several ago. At Casa de Luna there was a map of the route.



Several options were proposed. One was to walk part of the road and then cut over to the aqueduct. Unfortunately that choice was a bit too adventurous since it wasn't mapped. The second option was to walk 2/3 of the road and then head over to the open section of the trail. The third option was to simply walk the road all the way to Hiker Town.

I chose the third option. I feel a bit guilty for skipping part of the trail, but I left carrying only 3 liters of water and was not sure of the next reliable source. Also, I had not planned go an extra day (this portion would have added another 20 miles), so I didn't have enough food.

The road passed by Elizabeth Lake, which was almost completely dried up and then by Lake Hughes.

Even on a road walk there are a interesting sights. There were pretty flowers, a farm with lots of sheep, even little ones. There was even a farm with a couple of ostriches. One farm had their dish receiver painted as a yellow "smiley face". There were several farms that had fancy thoroughbred horses. And there were farms growing grapes and peaches.

By 2:30 I arrived at Hiker Town.



There are a number of buildings decorated as old-time western buildings. These are rented out to hikers if they want to stay overnight.

I cooked and ate my dinner there. As I was about to leave, Casey and Lightning Pad came in. They had just finished the portion of the trail that I skipped.

I left at 3 and headed towards the LA aqueduct. The first portion is open.



The trail crosses over and then follows a water pipeline for several miles.



It finally follows a covered aqueduct which simply looks like a paved road.



I am camped tonight in the desert near the aqueduct.

I am at PCT mile 524.4. The elevation is 3,061 feet.

## Day 27 - Wind Farms

Tuesday, May 12, 2015

Tuesday, May 12

I hiked over 13 hours today!

My day started at 5:30 as I watched the sunrise while walking along the covered aqueduct. I could see footprints of rabbits, deer, and coyotes in the dust of the dirt road. I could also see that someone else was already walking ahead of me.

Along the way I would occasionally see a hiker camped along the road, just like I had done. When I stopped to sign a trail register, another hiker caught up with me. His name was Bonus Miles. I had briefly seen him yesterday at Hiker Town.

We walked together as we entered a wind farm. A wind farm has many wind turbines that generate electricity as the wind turns their giant blades.



Soon the trail headed back into the mountains. Bonus Miles fell a little behind. I could also see someone far ahead. This is the view of the wind farm from the trail as it climbed into the mountains.





By noon we reached one of the few reliable sources of water, Tylerhorse Canyon creek. Already there was More Cowbell, who I first met in Idyllwild. I decided to cook lunch/dinner and got two liters of water. The next reliable source of water is 16 miles away.

Before I left, I found out that More Cowbell is planning to stay in Tehachapi tomorrow just like me. We agreed to share a room at the Best Western motel.

After hiking for another hour, the trail dropped down the mountain. I could see a trail on the next mountain and realized that my trail was dropping WAY down and I would have to hike all the way up again in the hot afternoon sun. This is one of the mental challenges of the trail, especially when you are already tired.

The trail went up and up and up. Often I looked up to what looked like the top, only to find out that there was another higher hill beyond. I yelled out a few unkind words on several occasions.

The trail topped out at 6,400 feet and as I descended I came upon some Trail Magic. Someone had left bottled water and FRESH crispy apples! That was one of the best tasting apples I have ever eaten!

It was getting late in the day as I headed down the trail. To my amazement there is another ENORMOUS wind farm!



I wanted to find a campsite, but the trail was on a steep hillside and there was no place to camp. Soon the sun began to set and I raced down the trail hoping it would lead to suitable camping spots. Finally at 7 PM there was a spot by Oak Creek. I was so happy to slip into my sleeping bag after more than 13 hours on the trail.

I am camped at PCT mile 558 in the middle of an enormous wind farm. The elevation here is 4,056 feet.

I hiked 33.6 miles today.

## Day 28 - Headed to Tehachapi

Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Wednesday, May 13

When you have been out on the trail for several days, nothing lifts the spirits better than the thought of a day or two in town. I'm starting to get the "hiker hunger", which happens when you are burning many more calories than the trail food can provide. That juicy hamburger or cheesy Mexican dish sounds SO good.

Last night I fell asleep to the sounds of the wind turbines. They sound like a passing freight train without the clicking of the wheels. It becomes a background noise; somewhat soothing.

I awoke at 5:15 and was on the trail by 5:45. I sent a text message to More Cowbell and confirmed that he was just getting started on the trail too. He was camped about a mile behind me and we needed to keep in touch since we are sharing a room in town.

Today was a short day of hiking since I was within 8 miles of interstate highway 58, the road where we were going to hitch into Tehachapi. The sunrise over the wind farm was spectacular.



The trail passed through private land where cattle were grazing.



I got to the freeway just as More Cowbell caught up with me. I had taken a picture of a list of Trail Angels in Tehachapi, so I started calling to see if we could get a ride into town. Unfortunately, most of the numbers did not answer, and the one that did couldn't help.

To compound the problem, there was very little traffic entering the freeway and it was illegal to walk down the side of the road.

Just when I thought we would have a really long wait, a hiker (Tallahassee) drove up in a rented car and dropped off a group of hikers. He offered us a ride into town! We were dropped off right at the door of the Best Western!



We rented a room for two nights. The first priority was to do laundry and take showers! It feels so good to be clean again.

Our next priority was FOOD! We walked down to the Apple Shed restaurant.



I had a juicy burger and potato wedges. We also got a list of local trail angels.

We read that the Kern Transit, the regional bus service, provides transportation back to the trail for a very reasonable price. In addition, the bus stop is just a couple blocks away! We decided that this is how we will return to the trail.

Tomorrow is a shopping day. I need 7 days of food to get to Kennedy Meadows. More Cowbell is thinking of taking 3 days of food and resupplying in Lake Isabella. That way he can reduce his pack weight. A problem in this section is that reliable water sources are far apart. Lots of water means a heavy pack. Seven days of food and lots of water makes for difficult days of hiking.

The idea of resupplying in Lake Isabella sounds attractive, but it is difficult to get to Lake

Isabella and back. If I could hike with a group going there, I think I would go for it.

Tonight we are had dinner at Reds BBQ.



Several other hikers showed up including Lost & Found and Tallahassee. We all had a good meal along with a cold brew. On the way back we both ordered real milkshakes from the Burger Spot.



Tonight it will be nice sleeping in a cozy room and a soft bed. But I will definitely miss seeing the stars, satellites and shooting stars!

# Day 29 - Zero Day in Tehachapi

Thursday, May 14, 2015

Thursday, May 14

A "zero" day is defined as a day when no hiking is done. You walk a total of zero miles. Today was one of those days.

When you are in town, there's always talk about the trail among the hikers. At this juncture, there's a lot of discussion regarding water availability in the next section. There is also a lot of talk about the weather since another storm is coming tonight and tomorrow, bringing rain and snow.

It was odd getting up this morning and taking a shower! I wasn't even dirty. I headed out for breakfast at the Village Grille restaurant, since they open at 5:30.



The western omelette with country potatoes was delicious.

I then returned to the motel and remembered that they had a free breakfast buffet. So what did I do? I had a second breakfast!

And, since I will be getting back on the trail again early tomorrow morning, I took a breakfast sandwich, cinnamon roll and a banana to eat early tomorrow morning.

Back at the motel room, I laid out my food plan. I need to buy 6 more days of food since I already have a day of food. I calculate that it will take 7 days to get to Kennedy Meadows.

More Cowbell and I headed to the Albertsons store which was about 1 1/2 miles away. I found everything I needed and came back to organize it.





I managed to cram it all into my food bag and then packed everything into my backpack. It feels heavy, but it always does when leaving town with a full load of water as well.

Before noon I was hungry AGAIN! Gee whiz, will I ever get enough?

I managed to take a nap for an hour until my stomach told me it was lunch time. I wanted to try a hamburger from the Burger Spot, but when I got there it was closed. So I walked down to the Apple Shed and had their huge hamburger and potato wedges.

It has been showery since noon, so I was glad to be wearing my rain jacket. We might even see snow tomorrow since the trail takes us over 6,000 feet.

More Cowbell came in at 4:30 and said we were invited to come over to the hot tub next door to relax with some other hikers. I was hesitant at first, but More Cowbell said "come on, live a little", so I went. I am so glad I did! Although I didn't have any official swimming trunks, my black underwear served just fine. The water was wonderfully warm. While we were there, it was raining and then hailing! We all had hail stones in our hair.



Afterwards, More Cowbell and I had dinner at the Village Grill Restaurant.

As always, I feel apprehensive about returning to the trail tomorrow. Perhaps it has something to do with leaving the comfort of the town? Or maybe it has something to do with the "adventure"!

## Comments

- DebbieStratton

May 15, 2015

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Awesome

- valoriezimmerman

May 15, 2015

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In case you didn't get my text: mashed potatoes and etc. are on their way to Independence. They should arrive next Thursday. Next time you have a last minute request, please mention when you need the stuff so I know whether or not to pay extra for faster shipping.

Love you! <3

- valoriezimmerman

May 15, 2015

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OMG, you are so ahead of schedule! It's already time to send your boxes for 5/26. I hope they reach you in time, Mr. Speed Demon! <3

- AnneEZJones

May 15, 2015

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I remember driving down to Arizona with Nickki and Kaylie (back in 1998/99??) somewhere around there, and going through Tahachapi was a trippy and kinda freaky!! Cool looking but almost scary at the same time. You don't see too many wind farms around these parts (duh, Anne!)

Daddy! I can still hardly contemplate how far and how much of every day you are walking/hiking! When I talk about your trip people are blown away that you are doing it! Especially right after you retired! So much for relaxing, huh?

But honestly I think you have inspired my coworker get on the trails with her husband. And this summer want to do the wonderland trail around rainier! If I had to guess what spurred the idea, MY BRAVE BOLD CRAZY PAPA!

I love you Daddy! I hope that new belt is helping with the pack and your back pain is getting lessened, I hope.

From now on I will try to keep my comments shorter because I have heard that I have a tendency to ramble on and not even notice until someone screams at me. I don't want to bother anyone. I want to chit chat to my dad, that's all. Really!

Rest now my sweet Dad, I say take a week in Maui then go back to the trail...? Yes?

But me a ticket and I will meet you In Maui!

I love you Pops! Stay hydrated, eat enough, keep taking lots of pictures. All those butts mooning the camera were funny! Why don't you moon the camera?!

Love litte a

- AnneEZJones

May 15, 2015

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"Zero" days in my Anne days are my favorite days! I have zero days every day. ;dad I guess you can refer to me as a zero. Relates in many ways! Rarely do I have a "nearo"

## Day 30 - Up to the Sky River Wind Farm

Monday, May 18, 2015

Friday, May 15

I begin my 7-day walk that will lead me to Kennedy Meadows, the start of the high Sierras. Early this morning, More Cowbell and I caught the local bus that took us to the trail at interstate 58. Also starting the trail today was "Lost and Found", who I had met several times in Tehachapi.



The forecast for today was cloudy skies but the clouds were scraping the mountains where we were headed. In addition, there was a strong cold wind whipping around us!

The trail switch backs up the mountain gaining 2,600 feet in 5 miles. As we neared the top we entered the clouds. For a time it was raining so we donned our rain gear.

The trail then drops down and follows a jeep road for about 4 miles. Although the rain had stopped by this time, the dust on the road had turned to sticky mud. As we walked, the mud built up under our shoes. It was like walking on elevated shoes.



Needless to say, it made walking difficult.

By mid-morning we reached the Sky River Ranch wind farm.



The wind turbines are situated along about 6 miles on the ridge line. They are an older style and smaller than the giant turbines we saw in the desert.

By 1:30 we reached Golden Oaks spring. There were two tiny trickles of water but enough to cook our lunch/dinner.



We then entered an area that had burned.



It will be many years before the forest is restored here.

By 5 PM we found camp sites in a grassy meadow under large trees.



The wind is very breezy and cold. I'm wearing almost all of my clothes and hope the tent doesn't blow down!

I am camped at PCT mile 593. The elevation is 5,042 feet.



## Day 31 - The Driest Section of the PCT

Monday, May 18, 2015

Saturday, May 16

The wind never let up last night. It was a cold wind that brought in low clouds for a foggy morning.

More Cowbell, Lost and Found, and I all hiked together, hitting the trail at 6:10. Since it was so foggy, we really couldn't see what we were hiking through. And, the downside was that all the little plants along the trail were wet, so soon our feet were wet. This was our view for most of the morning.



By ten, we arrived at Robin Bird Spring. The spring is fenced off to keep cattle from fouling the water.



I got a couple of liters of water and then cooked lunch/dinner. I got a picture of Lost and Found (standing) and Origami (sitting).



At about 1 PM the sun came out. I noticed lots of these flowers in bloom along the trail.



Although I had 3 liters of water, I needed to get 3 more since the next reliable source of water is almost 40 miles away!

Unfortunately, the only upcoming water was 1.5 miles off trail at Willow Spring. The trail dropped down over 600 feet and followed a gully where I had to scramble down large rocks. When I finally got to the water, it was in a cattle trough. There was algae floating on top, but the water underneath was clear. I drank over a liter of my existing water, and got 3 more liters. That should allow me 4 liters for tomorrow and two for the following day.

By the time I had got the water and rejoined the PCT, it was time to set up camp.



I hiked for 13 hours today and have been on the trail for a month!

I am camped at PCT mile 621.9. The elevation here is 5,233 feet.

By the way, did you notice?



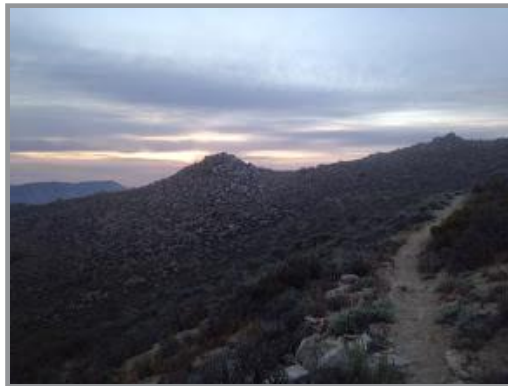
## Day 32 - 30 miles to Walker Pass

Monday, May 18, 2015

Sunday, May 17

The Joshua trees and desert sage floated past like eerie ghosts in the night. My head lamp lit up a little circle of the trail. I started walking at 3:50 AM and I was night hiking. Since there is no reliable water between my campsite and Walker Pass campground, night hiking conserves water by hiking in the cool of the day.

The sunrise was pretty. It was also partly cloudy so that would help as well.



By mid morning I saw where the trail was headed. It would go to the very top of the mountain with the rocks.



The elevation gain was over 1,700 feet. I got a picture of Origami just after he reached the top.



For much of the day the trail wound through forests of Pinion Pines. Often there were flowers along the trail.



By 1:30 the trail joined and followed a jeep road for over two miles. Unfortunately there were four-wheelers and motorcyclists using it too. I had to step off the road and wait until the dust settled before continuing.



The trail finally left the road and I was rewarded with more flowers!





The last five miles to Walker Pass campground were all downhill. My feet are complaining!

I was rewarded with trail magic at the campground! Rachel gave me a salad and two scrambled egg tacos. I gave her a donation and in return got a glass of wine!



I am camped tonight at PCT mile 651.4. The elevation here is 5,018 feet.

This is my campsite.



## Comments

- [DebbieStratton](#)

May 18, 2015

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Awesome

- [AnneEZJones](#)

May 18, 2015

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Walking in the middle of the night, crazy times are ahead, because of the summer heat I'm thinking... Walking over 30 miles a day is more than I DRIVE TO AND FROM DAILY TO WORK!

I love you crazy man. I hope I have some of your crazy in me somewhere!

Love your updates, keep 'em coming! (My co-workers are asking for updates on you, too! I want more "Dad-a-roo" pictures

Love you,  
a

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

May 18, 2015

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Congrats on the next hundred miles, Dad! Wish you didn't have to fill up in the cattle trough, but I suppose that is better than no water at all. We've missed reading your updates for the last few days, so I'm happy to be able to catch-up with your journey!

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

May 19, 2015

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Good to hear from you again after the gap. Thank goodness for the spot, so we all knew you were safe. The cabin dinner was fun; I think that was the first time just the boys and I were at the cabin together since maybe the 70s. We saw not a single mouse dropping! A couple of dead mice though. I hope I mailed those boxes in time! You are walking lots and lots of miles. Love you, <3

- [SteveE](#)

May 19, 2015

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3:50AM..... Back on the old Boeing schedule I see, but minus the shirt & tie :-)

Over 600 miles traveled already, and you're still taking time to smell some roses. Quite the remarkable feat!

I'm really enjoying following your posts. Thanks for taking the time to put them together.  
Enjoy!

## Day 33 - Double-Pack had an accident

Tuesday, May 19, 2015

Monday, May 18

A simple misstep. The trail crumbles away. The fall rips a 5 inch gash near the knee. Gear scatters across the trail.

That's what I saw as I rounded a bend in the trail. Double-Pack, a tall burly man, was busy trying to gather his gear that had scattered after the fall. I helped him put everything in order. He was lucky that he only skinned his knee. And he was lucky that his pack didn't pull him down the embankment.

After everything seemed in order, I asked him why he was carrying TWO packs? He said, "I need a lot of food. I have two bear canisters, extra shoes; I just couldn't get the weight down. I carry one pack on the front and the other on my back. They counterbalance each other."

He asked me to hand him his rucksack, which I guess he strapped on top. It weighed more than my pack. All of his gear weighed 140 pounds!

He somehow got turned around and had been heading the wrong direction on the trail. In addition he was totally out of water so I gave him a liter to get him to the next water source.

After all this, I wondered if maybe there was a hidden camera somewhere recording hikers reactions. I do hope he got back on the trail!

Earlier this morning I was happy that it didn't rain last night and it was mostly sunny as I hit the trail at 6. At Walker Pass was a memorial to Joseph Walker who discovered this pass over the Sierra Nevada mountains.



The sunrise was gorgeous as it peeked over the hill.



After helping with Double-Pack, I headed up the trail and saw this amazing mountain of granite.



I feel like I am inching closer to the high Sierras.

I got to enjoy wildflowers again.



By lunchtime I arrived at Joshua Tree springs. They say that the water contains too much uranium, but the water report says it is OK to drink. I'm feeling OK now, and the water tastes good. Here is what the spring looks like.



The rest of the day was warm. Too warm for me as the trail ascended and descended multiple mountains. It was warm enough for this three foot snake to be on the trail.



You would be proud of me today. I stopped at 4:30 and set up camp. My view:



I am camped at PCT mile 672.9. The elevation here is 6,710 feet.



## Day 34 - 30 Miles to Kennedy Meadows

Wednesday, May 20, 2015

Tuesday, May 19

A cold beer and people clapping as I arrived. What could be better? That is what happened when Lucky and I arrived at the Kennedy Meadows general store.



The day began at 5:15 as I started packing up. I noticed that my tent had frost on it! I was on the trail before 6 and was rewarded with a beautiful sunrise over the mountains.



I felt anxious because I knew that there would be a strenuous climb to over 8,000 feet. That's a thousand feet higher than the typical climb. How would my legs respond? Would I be able to keep a reasonable pace?

At first the trail was easy as it followed the contour of the hills. I noticed what looked like a small skunk sleeping on the trail.



I was afraid to poke it for fear that it would wake up and spray me! What I found out later is that this was a baby skunk that didn't even have his eyes open yet. He had somehow fallen from his nest. Some other hikers found his nest and returned him to it.

By 9:30 I started up the big climb. My original plan was to stop at Fox Mill Spring to have lunch and get more water. However, it was 11:30 and I realized that I could go to the next water source because I had used very little water. Also, I wasn't really hungry for lunch yet.

I reached the top at 12:30 and my jaw dropped when I saw the view.



The Sierras stretched out before me! Now THAT put some power into my legs!

The trail then dropped down 2,000 feet to the Kern River. I was amazed at how dry and desert-like the mountains were. Also there had been a wildfire some time ago so all of the larger trees were simply skeletons. You might think going downhill would be easy, but I is almost as hard as going up because it works different muscles and you are slowing the weight of a heavy pack. It also can easily lead to twisted ankles or tripping if you take a bad step.

When I reached the bottom, I ran into Lucky, a guy I had met yesterday at Joshua Tree springs. We hiked together as we followed the river towards Kennedy Meadows. The river was a welcome change from the parched land that I have been hiking through.



By 5 PM we arrived at the Kennedy Meadows general store. Lucky bought a six pack of beer and shared with me. We both got our boxes and then headed behind the store to camp.

I am camped tonight at Kennedy Meadows, PCT mile 702.4. The elevation here is 6,133 feet.

Oh, did you notice?



I passed 700 miles since I started this adventure!

## Day 35 - Resting in Kennedy Meadows

Thursday, May 21, 2015

Wednesday, May 20

Sleeping in while on the trail is a luxury. It was 6:30 before I got out of my sleeping bag and headed down to the general store for their all you can eat pancake breakfast. The store owner has an outdoor gas stove where he cooked three pancakes at a time. He served coffee with breakfast as well.



Out behind the store is where everyone camps. There is a giant teepee marking the entrance to the campground area.



I suppose several people could camp inside if they wanted to.

My task for today was to figure out exactly how many days of food I needed to go from here to Independence. The food would have to include a side trip to summit Mt Whitney. I decided seven days of food would be enough.

The difficult task was trying to compact everything to see if it would fit in my bear canister. A bear canister is a container especially made for food storage that keeps bears from being able to get to the food. I was able to get four days in the container. The rest I hope to eat early in the next section and hope there are no animal encounters.

I spent most of the day relaxing on the porch of the store.



I sent myself a pair of new shoes so I wore them all day. I also made sure the bear canister fit into my pack.

Several other hikers arrived and left. It's fun to watch the new arrivals get the boxes that were mailed and open them. It was like opening Christmas presents.



I was hoping that More Cowbell would arrive, but he may have ended up talking an extra day in Lake Isabella.

This place is another hiker vortex and I feel anxious about heading out tomorrow. A heavy pack has never been much fun to carry. Fortunately I have estimated lower daily miles for the next section so I shouldn't feel pressure to hurry.



## Day 36 - Heading into the Sierras

Tuesday, May 26, 2015

Thursday, May 21

The snow is falling on my tent. It makes a soft but tinny sound. The ground is starting to turn white. It's easy to forget that it's still winter in the high country.

My morning began as it started to get light, about 5:15. My challenge was to get the bear canister into my pack in a way that would still allow me to pack in everything else. I decided to put it at the bottom of my pack. With a lot of squeezing everything fit. Of course the pack is heavy with seven days of food!

I was headed towards the trail by 6. I got to finish eating a bag of Fritos on the way. They were yummy!

The trail followed the Kern River. I signed the trail register and entered Sequoia National Forest.



It was wonderful listening to the sound of running water. By mid morning the trail leveled off. There was a group of school kids on a field trip asking questions about my through hike. How long had I been hiking? Was I hiking alone?

The trail passed through an enormous meadow named Beck Meadow, and in the distance I could just make out snowy peaks.



By noon the trail had topped out at 8,000 feet and was dropping back down where it would cross the Kern River. I needed to get water and it was a perfect place to cook lunch/dinner. Other hikers were already there doing the same thing.



Double Happiness (Casey) arrived shortly after I did. We all ate and relaxed for a bit. There was a lot of discussion regarding how far to hike today, since the next ten miles or so take us over a mountain with the trail topping out at 10,500 feet. The trail wound through pine forests. There seemed to be a lot of chipmunks as well. Although I was the first to leave the river, it wasn't long before the rest of the group caught up and passed me.



The younger generation really has an advantage when it comes to being able to sustain a pace uphill. By 4:30 I knew I wouldn't make it to the top, so I found a sheltered nook and set up my tent before it started snowing. It is amazingly quiet, now that it has stopped snowing. I can hear some sort of bird squawking in the distance. I should get a good rest unless I freeze. I am camped at PCT mile 722.5. The elevation here is 10,236 feet.

## Day 37 - Sierra Snow

Tuesday, May 26, 2015

Friday, May 22

The snow that fell last night didn't stick but there were frozen droplets on the tent. Unfortunately I didn't sleep well. Even though I had several jackets on, I wasn't warm. The only way I felt somewhat warm was to sleep in a fetal position. Plus I had to get up three times to heed the call of nature. In addition there was a bird that made a "arrack, arrack" call all night long. I could have wrung its neck!

I was on the trail by 6:15 and finished the climb I was too tired to do yesterday. I stopped for water and cooked lunch/dinner at 10:30. It was sunny so I briefly aired out my sleeping bag. But the clouds were moving in.

The next section of trail climbed back above 10,000 feet. I feel so sluggish and it is getting me down. I am seriously considering NOT climbing Mt Whitney because I am moving so slowly uphill.

But the big surprise came when it started snowing! At first it was a few flakes and then it came down in harder and harder.



I had on my raincoat and rain pants but it put me in a foul mood. Can I really complete this section; this hike? I am moving so slowly and am so tired. Shouldn't it be getting easier to climb hills? I really need some words of encouragement.

The snow continued for several hours.



I was worried that it would completely cover the trail. In addition, there is no way to know how long this may last. Could a couple of feet of snow be on its way?

I decided to head to Diaz Creek, about four miles down the trail. About a half mile before

getting there, I noticed a lady setting up her tent. There was plenty of space for mine too. There was a brief sun break so I got everything set up before the snow started falling again. Hopefully tomorrow will be a better day.  
I am camped at PCT mile 740.9. The elevation here is 9,699 feet.

## Day 38 - A Big Decision

Tuesday, May 26, 2015

Saturday, May 23

Mt Whitney will not be on my itinerary. I'm still feeling the affects of the higher elevation and several times today I felt a bit dizzy. In addition, I heard that yesterday's snowfall kept everyone from summiting the mountain. My body is telling me that I have reached its limits.

It snowed a little bit last night, but there was no accumulation. What was odd was that there was ice on both the inside and outside of my tent. I made a racket trying to brush it off. The poor lady camped nearby was probably wondering what this crazy PCT hiker was doing! I ended up bundling it up and strapping it to the top of my pack.

The day started off sunny. I walked through awesome forests of foxtail pines. I understand that this is one of the few places where they grow and that some live to be 2,000 years old. Some have died but are still standing.



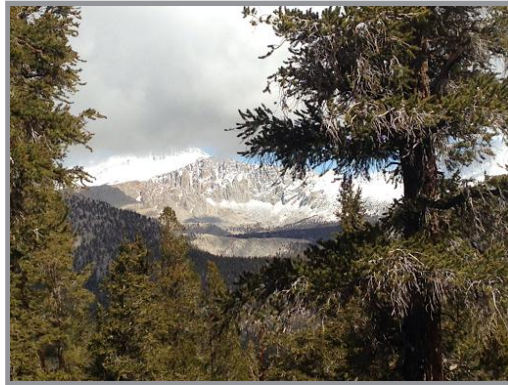
The needles on their branches look like a bottle brush.



At 10 AM, I decided to stop and dry out my tent and sleeping bag. I noticed that the clouds were starting to gather again and I wanted dry gear for tonight.



When I headed up the trail again I was treated to this sight.



The high Sierras are getting closer!

Yesterday I mentioned that I needed some words of encouragement. The picture is difficult to see, but someone had written in the snow, "We're all going to make it this time." I cried.



My plan today was to stop very early, perhaps at Chicken Spring Lake, just 10 miles down the trail. However, I arrived at noon and met several new people and was encouraged to continue. Zombie has a heavy pack and a very slow pace. I followed him for a while and felt better about the pace I have been keeping.

I also met another gentleman named Willy.

The views get better and better.



I am camped tonight at PCT mile 758.1. The elevation is 10,471 feet.

## Day 39 - Amazing Scenery

Tuesday, May 26, 2015

Sunday, May 24

I couldn't believe it when I heard snow hitting my tent in the middle of the night. It covered the ground and I was thinking that it was a repeat of yesterday's storm.

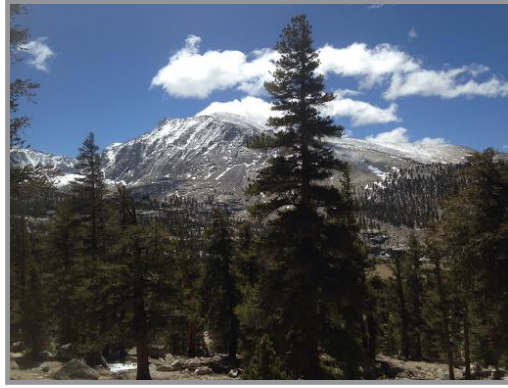


I did as much as I could in the tent before climbing out. To my surprise the skies were cloudless!

I headed down the trail at 6:30.



There were several creek crossings but I was able to hop on rocks to get across. The views of the mountains on the way were spectacular.



I know I made the right decision about Mt Whitney when I heard that many who tried to summit had to turn back due to snowfall and weather. By 10:30 I caught up with Willy and his friend Carlos. I fixed my dinner and hiked much of the afternoon with them. We are headed to Forester Pass which is a little notch in the snowy peaks.



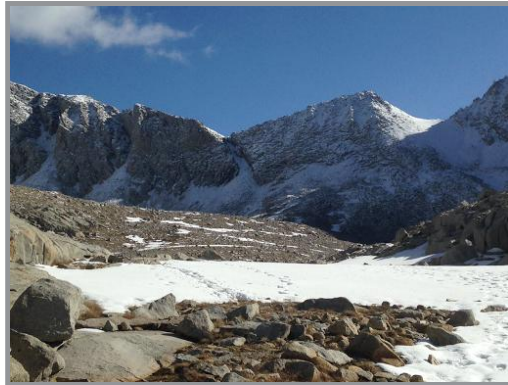
I am camped at PCT mile 774.9. The elevation here is 10,734 feet.

## Day 40 - Highest Point on the Trail

Tuesday, May 26, 2015

Monday, May 25

I really wondered if I could do it. I've been struggling with the altitude even though I have been at nearly 10,000 feet for several days. And this morning I took to the trail and headed toward a wall of rock and snow. It was only five miles away.



The trail passes over this wall of rock at a point called Forester Pass. It is at 13,200 feet high. As I got closer, I could see the notch in the rock that I would pass over.

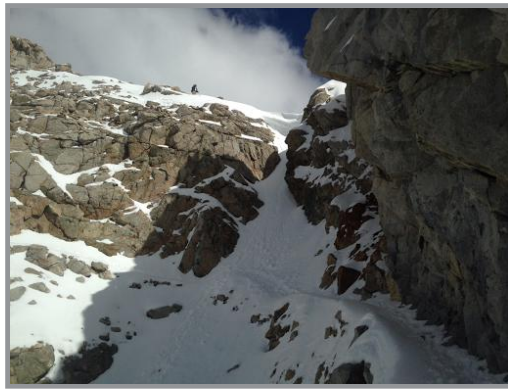


The trail switch backs up the side of the rock wall. Towards the top, a three foot wide path has been blasted from the rock. Of course this entire portion of the trail is completely covered with snow, and footing is difficult because there are semi-frozen footprints from those who have already gone up. I put on my micro-spikes to give me better traction. I was really feeling the affects of the altitude. A couple of times I felt light headed. I went slowly and set a goal of walking up one switchback before stopping to catch my breath. About half way up, I was amazed at the view to the south.





I finally neared the top and saw the snow chute below the pass.



This is considered to be the most dangerous point because a slip here would send you down to the rocks below. Fortunately the snow was soft and there were deep footprints to follow. Here is Willy crossing the chute.



At the top there was a snow cornice so the trail scabbled around it. By 10 AM, I was at the top! I was elated!



Moments later Willy and Carlos arrived. We all took time to marvel at the views. This is Carlos (standing) and Willy (sitting).



On the way down the trail was completely covered in snow.



Even with micro-spikes it was slippery. I fell four times but did no damage. After dropping two thousand feet we were once again below the snow line and I was able to remove my micro-spikes.

The trail continued to descend for five more miles. There are rugged mountains on every side and beautiful streams cascading through the valley. I understand why this is one of the most beautiful places in the world.

We are going out to the town of Independence tomorrow. We have to take the Kearsarge Pass trail to the Onion Valley trail head where we hope to hitch a ride.

I am camped tonight at PCT mile 788.6. The elevation here is 10,301 feet.

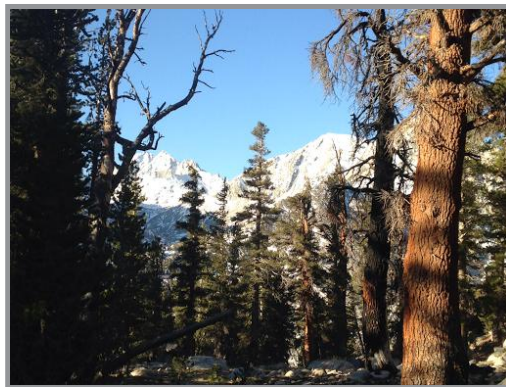
## Day 41 - Resupply in Independence

Tuesday, May 26, 2015

Tuesday, May 26

I knew today was going to be a day for leaving the high Sierras and walking out to the Onion Valley trail head. Willy, Carlos and I needed to get to the town of Independence in order to get food for the next section of our hike.

We all packed up and hit the trail at 7 AM. I had to carry my tent bundled on top of my pack because the water vapor from my breathing had frozen on the inside of the tent. This has been a problem several times because there is not enough air circulation at night. This was the view from my tent site.



We took the Kearsarge Pass trail. I knew nothing about this trail, other than it led to the Onion Valley trail head. The views were spectacular.



I got a picture of Willy as we headed up to the pass.



As we got higher the views back to the mountains were tremendous.



Within two hours we reached the pass at 11,760 feet.



We needed to arrange a ride from the trail head. It is 13 miles to Independence. Unfortunately the person who we tried to call wasn't answering their phone. We proceeded to go down hoping to find a ride.

We went down and down and down and down. It took us two hours of fast down hill hiking to get to the trail head. I am very concerned about having to climb back up this trail when we return in a couple of days. On the way down we saw Double Happiness (Casey) and Dirty Bowl.

When we got to the trail head, there were two guys loading up their truck. They offered us a ride to Independence!





When we got to town, we were walking by the post office. I asked a man standing there where the Courthouse Motel was located. He gave me directions, but said that he was the owner of the Independence Inn and could give us a good deal. He even offered us a ride!



We accepted his offer. Willy and I are sharing a room. Carlos has to head home and was going to hitch hike to Lone Pine.

We all showered and then had lunch at a nearby Mexican food cart. The food was marvelous!

Jim Getzinger, the owner of the Independence Inn, then offered us a ride to the town of Bishop. Willy needed some gear and we offered to buy Jim his dinner in return for his generosity.

I got a replacement tip for my trekking pole, some warm sleeping socks and a new fuel canister for my stove. On the way back we stopped at the Courthouse Motel to pick up my resupply package.

I have to say Jim runs a great establishment and I am highly impressed with his willingness to help PCT hikers!

## Comments

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

May 27, 2015

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So amazingly good to hear from you again, Bobby. I'm reading these in order, and hope all really \*is\* well. I love you. <3



Bob - the pictures along the trail have all been nice but the ones in this post are STUNNING! Well done on both the pass AND the pictures!

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

May 27, 2015

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Hmmm, not all the posts are up, according to your titles. Days 36, 37, 38, 39 and 40 are not there. It was so good to get a text from you today! Best of luck back on the trail, Turtle Bob! <3

- [AnneEZJones](#)

May 29, 2015

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SO SO SO happy to be reading updates from the trail!!! But I put myself in your shoes about reporting and hoped all was good as you're on an incredibly tiring journey! I'm reading in order as well and hope you are feeling well, your feet are fresh and safe! I love you, Pops!

(Gotta go read the next update!)

- [AnneEZJones](#)

May 29, 2015

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Spring IS on its way! Remember Dad, June is only a couple days away. Soon it will be HOT! It seems like a eternity when you have to curl up in a ball just to try to stay warm. Maybe you can get to a nearby town and take a extra long "zero". Take it from me that your body is trying to tell you something. My goodness Daddy you've walked over 740 miles!!!!!! Read that part again... 740 MILES! My body aches just thinking of that! Take a little rest Daddy, the trail isn't going anywhere! I love you!

a

- [AnneEZJones](#)

May 29, 2015

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So relieved you decided the skip Mt Whitney! As mom said and I agree that I think it's going to be around for awhile it still is a crazy feat you are doing, as I get asked nearly daily how and where you are. I think you may have inspired my co-worker and her husband to do the Wonderland trail this summer! You always have been an inspiration to me and now to people who have never even met you! Just like all the school kids a few days back. You keep on giving me hope that it's not too late to write a chapter of inspiration in my life story, too. Keep it up Daddy! You can do it!

a

- [AnneEZJones](#)

May 29, 2015

---

I'm still voting for the extra zero days in a nearby town, Dad. The scenery IS awesome, why not stay and rest a little? You look so skinny! Eat more Fritos ☺ Congratulations on hiking over the pass! I think if I were you I would just want to take pictures all day long, build a big bon fire, and eat nothing but s'mores for two days straight! That's what my plan would be!

Do you think you may have altitude sickness? Or a combo of being exhausted with your medicines is making you light headed? Should I call Dr. Jordan? She knows about your hike (was talking about you at my last visit) and may have insight into what's up... Now go eat something skinny man!

Love you, Dad!

Little a

- [AnneEZJones](#)

June 04, 2015

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Kennedy Meddows is one of the key stops for the character in the movie "Wild" (Reese Witherspoon play the lead role). I don't think she started in Mexico like you did, but she didn't have to sleep on the ground for the first time in weeks and was so happy to take a shower!

I wanna know what you think of the movie when you get back. Maybe we should make a "Wild" date night and you can tell me all the places they filmed!!!

I love you pops!

a

## Day 42 - Resting in Independence

Wednesday, May 27, 2015

Wednesday, May 27

As I have said before, rest days for a through hiker aren't really restful.

For breakfast, Willy and I had coffee and chocolate cinnamon cake with Jim, the motel owner.

Willy spent much of the morning trying to find an air leak in his Thermo-rest Neoair mattress. In the end he couldn't find the leak and decided to send his mattress home. He is going to use a Z-rest pad instead.

I went through my gear and decided to send home my digital camera and a few other items that I haven't used. The lens on the camera won't retract properly. I mailed them at the Post Office.

I set out my food and made a shopping list for snack items I needed. We will need a maximum of seven days of food. We will be resupplying at Vermillion Valley Resort, a bit less than 100 miles away.

We set off mid morning to get breakfast at the local cafe. Unfortunately the cafe was closed on Wednesday, so we had breakfast at Subway.

On the way back we did our shopping at the Chevron and Shell mini-marts. I must confess that the Chevron store was a disappointment as it had very little selection. Yogi's guide led me to believe that the Chevron was the better store. It wasn't.

I came back and assembled my food. I finished by loading it into my bear canister. My pack is now ready for tomorrow's hike.

At lunchtime we had real Mexican burritos from the local vendor.



I also took a moment to get a picture of our motel. There are six units and Jim, the owner, was busy installing a central vacuum system.





I called the person who can shuttle us back to the trail. We will be leaving at 6:30 tomorrow morning.

Later this afternoon we shared a few beers with Jim. He told us stories about his former career as a truck driver and about how he got into the motel business.



Later in the afternoon, he rented two more rooms and then showed us how he turned on the "No Vacancy" sign - it was all done manually.



Willy and I were going to have a meal at the fancy French restaurant, but it too was closed. What is it with restaurants in this town? We ended up going back to Subway for dinner.

I didn't mention it, but a couple of days ago I managed to do a "turtle" while walking down the trail. A turtle is when you fall down and land on your back with your feet and arms

pointed upward. It happened when another hiker was coming up behind me. Instead of stepping off the trail, I twisted my head around and tripped on a rock. Down I went, landing squarely on my back. I had to be helped back to my feet. Fortunately no damage was done other than to my pride!

I am feeling very anxious about hiking up 2,000 feet tomorrow to get back onto the trail. Wish me luck and strength!

## Comments

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

May 27, 2015

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Good luck, Dad! It is really good to hear from you and catch up on your journey. It sounds like this is a difficult part of the trek, but I know that you can make it even if you need to take it slower than you think you should be going. The Sierra's look amazing, and I can only imagine how difficult this section is with the altitude, elevation gain, and weather conditions.

You've got a lot of folks here in Seattle cheering for you and interested to hear about the highs and lows (literally and figuratively!) of your travels. I personally know that there are more than a handful of folks that have never met you, but are dutifully checking your blog on a regular basis to follow along with the amazing undertaking you've committed to.

Keep up the great job that you're doing (by your initial estimates, you're supposed to be in Kennedy Meadows today!). I know that you can do it, even if the trail ahead looks daunting. Good luck tomorrow--I love you!

Paul

- [valoriezimmerman](#)

May 27, 2015

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Paul, your dad texted me today. He's in Independence, and back to the trail tomorrow. Independence is where I sent the extra box full of mashed potatoes and ramen noodles. Love to you all. <3

## Day 43 - Glen Pass

Thursday, June 04, 2015

Thursday, May 28

*I was on some rocks with my crampons on when one of the tines caught and through me off balance. I landed hard on the sharp rocks. When I got up I felt bruises on my left leg and a twinge in my artificial hip.*

That is how Willy described what happened as he was descending the snow field on the north side of Glen Pass.

Earlier this morning Willy and I had coffee with Jim, the owner of the Independence Inn. After saying our farewells, we were driven to the Onion Valley trail-head by Paul, who runs a shuttle service. We paid him \$55, which I thought was expensive, but it was better than trying to hitchhike.

We were on the trail by 7. The view was beautiful as we passed a small lake.



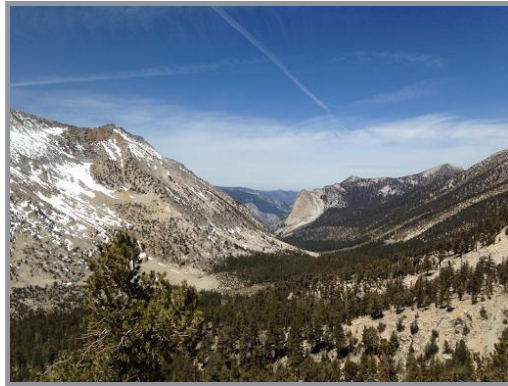
I want to thank all those who were thinking of me this morning, because I had an amazing amount of endurance hiking up the trail to Kearsarge Pass. I counted switchbacks as I went. There are 55.

In two hours a lady sitting on a rock in the sun said, "Hello! I'm Olga." I looked up and we were at the pass! I couldn't believe it! I had figured that it would take us at least four hours. It was a miracle!



We chatted for some time and then headed down the trail towards the Pacific Crest Trail. We joined the PCT at about 11 AM. We now had a decision to make. Should we stop early, or head over Glen Pass? The pass was just two miles away, but it meant a 1500

foot climb with a descent on the other side over snow.  
We decided to head over the pass.  
I lagged behind on the way up, but noticed a beautiful view.



At the top, we looked down on the Rae Lakes.



I put on my micro-spikes and headed out onto the snowfield while Willy donned his crampons. This is the view of the snowfield from the top.



This is the view as I followed the trail in the snow.





The difficulty on the snow was twofold. One, you didn't want to stumble and slide down the slope into the rocks. Two, you didn't want to "post hole" your leg in the snow. What can happen is you take a step, but the snow is so soft that you sink up to your knee or thigh. It is difficult to pull your leg out, and when you do it leaves a deep hole in the snow. I post holed a couple of times and managed to rip open the crotch of my pants. It took over an hour to get off the snowfield and onto the trail below. This is looking back up to the snowfield from the trail below.



I waited almost an hour for Willy to finally show up. And then he told me about his fall on the rocks. He was in pain so we found a campsite near the lake.



This could be a hike ending injury for Willy. He is going to see how it feels tomorrow. If he cannot hike, he may need help to get medical attention. I am really worried about him.



I am camped at PCT mile 793.7. The elevation here is 10, 535 feet.

## Day 44 - Pinchot Pass

Thursday, June 04, 2015

Friday, May 29

I was worried that Willy would wake up this morning to a lot of pain from his fall on the rocks. To my amazement, he said he felt much better.

We were packed up and on the trail by 6:15. This greeted us as we walked towards Pinchot Pass.



Since we had camped at Rae Lake, we dropped down for six miles to the Woods Creek bridge. The bridge is a suspension bridge. One person at a time can cross. It takes a bit of practice to walk across and keep it from swaying.



From the Woods Creek bridge, the trail ascends for almost eight miles to reach Pinchot Pass. The elevation gain is over 4,000 feet. I knew I would go slowly, so I headed up and told Willy that he would probably catch up to me in a short time.

There were many streams that crossed the trail, but I did have to wade across the White Fork creek. It was the first one that I had to wade.

The trail followed Woods Creek as it cascaded down the valley. In one area the creek flows over a long stretch of smooth rock. It is called the "water slide".



At one point the creek dropped in a magnificent waterfall.



As the trail rose above tree line, the views of the mountains were amazing.



One of the difficulties at this time of year is that there are many patches of snow which conceal the trail. Usually there are footprints across the snow, but the problem is that the snow has been melting. Sometimes when you follow the footprints, your leg sinks deeply into the snow. It makes for very slow progress.

By 2:30 I finally made it to the top. My legs felt like spaghetti and it was difficult to catch my breath. The view from the top was incredible.



I didn't know if Willy was behind or ahead of me, so I started down. The problem with crossing snowfields late in the day is post holing. I post holed about eight times. Twice my foot was so deep I couldn't pull it out! I had to dig it out with my trekking pole. It took me an hour to get below the snowfields.

There wasn't much opportunity for camping until the South Fork of the Kings River, about 2.5 miles down the trail. Just as I was selecting a campsite, I spotted Willy coming down the trail. He had been a half hour behind me all day. He was feeling pretty good. I am so relieved!

We are camped right next to the river. We will have to wade across this river tomorrow morning.

I am camped at PCT mile 811.5. The elevation here is 10,027 feet.

## Day 45 - Mather Pass

Thursday, June 04, 2015

Saturday May 30

I could hear the roar of the South Fork of the Kings River all night. The sound came as a reminder that I needed to cross over its rushing waters.

Willy and I were packed up by 6:30. We hunted upstream and downstream for a likely place to cross. I finally found a place where I could hop rocks to an island in the middle and then walk a fallen log to the other side! No wading required! This is what the river crossing looked like.

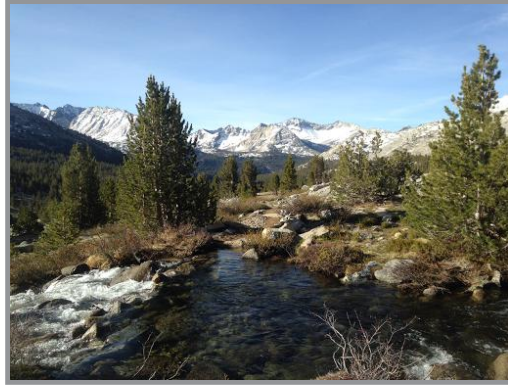


As we ascended the trail, the morning sunlight illuminated the mountains around us.

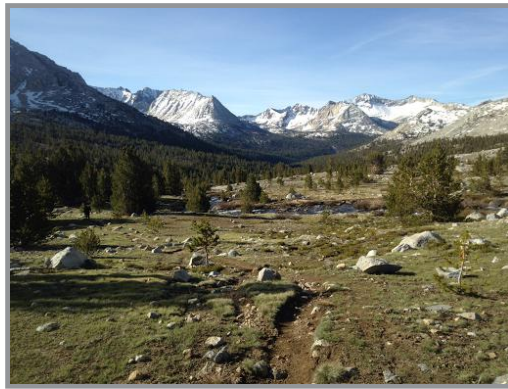


Quite often there were creeks to cross, and most could be crossed by hopping on rocks.





As we got further up, the view behind us was amazing.



When we got above tree line, we could see Mather Pass in the distance. It is the low spot to the left.



By 9:30 we reached the top at 12,047 feet. The view to the south was breathtaking.



Another hiker, Redwood, was sitting at the top admiring the view.



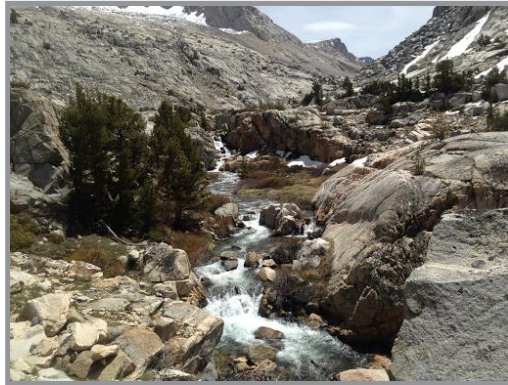
Willy was right behind me and we took a break.



The view to the north showed snowfields, frozen lakes and a valley carved by glaciers.



The trail followed Palisade Creek as it roared down the valley. There were several amazing waterfalls.



It took us until 1 o'clock to reach the bottom of the valley. We went from over 12,000 feet to just above 8,000 feet. My leg muscles were sore!  
We decided to head towards Muir Pass, because it is considered one of the hardest due to snowfields that have to be crossed both on the way up and the way down. We hiked until 5:30 and are within six miles of the pass.  
This is my tent site tonight.



I am camped at PCT mile 832.8. The elevation here is 9,218 feet.

## Day 46 - Muir Pass

Thursday, June 04, 2015

Sunday May 31

Other than Forester Pass, Muir Pass is considered one of the most difficult passes to climb. From the low point of 8,000 feet, the trail climbs gradually for over 13 miles to 11,980 feet. In addition, there are snowfields for more than a mile on each side that must be crossed. Snowfields this time of year means "post holing".

Willy and I got on the trail shortly after six. The trail followed the Middle Fork of the Kings River. There were beautiful waterfalls.



The views of the snow covered mountains were also breathtaking.



Once we came to the snowfields, it was difficult to find the trail. To compound matters, I was having difficulty breathing again due to the altitude. I tried to get into a breathing rhythm where I would breathe in on one step and breathe out on the next. I still ended up stopping a lot to catch my breath.

By 10 I jumped for joy to see the Muir hut atop the pass.





There were already several other hikers sitting in the hut to get out of the wind.



The view to the north of the pass showed large snowfields and frozen lakes.



When we headed down, the first large snowfield was frozen enough that we could make a fast pace without post holing. But further down, the snow was soft and post holing was common. It was slow going and difficult. The surrounding mountains were fabulous.





When we were finally below the snow line, we crossed the inlet to Evolution Lake.



The trail followed Evolution River down the valley. It is a beautiful river.



One of the major river crossings is the ford of the Evolution River. We decided to take the alternate crossing where the river is wider. The water came up just below my knee. It was not difficult.



We found a campsite next to the river.  
I am camped at PCT mile 850.4. The elevation here is 9,128 feet.

## Day 47 - Selden Pass

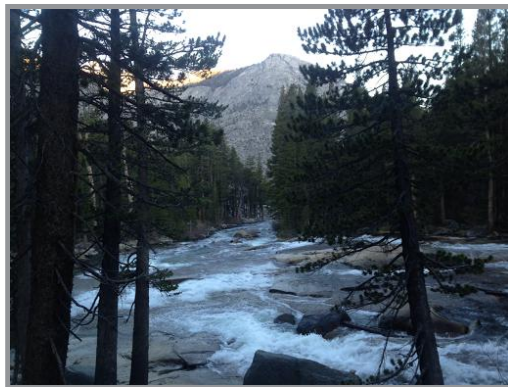
Thursday, June 04, 2015

Monday June 1

When the climb up to Selden pass started, I began counting switchbacks on the trail. It began to level off when the count got to 23. We were halfway to the top.

When you are through-hiking, there are several things that dictate how far you are going to hike on any given day. These include availability of water, your food supply, amount of elevation gain, and physical hazards (ice, melting snow, storms, high water, etc.). Today, the concern was elevation and whether we could hike 15 miles to cross Selden Pass and get to a campsite on the other side.

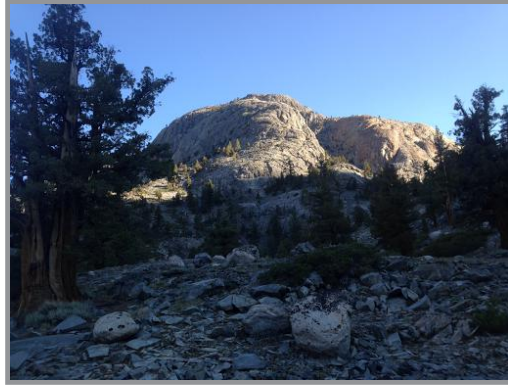
We were on the trail at 6. The river and mountains were gorgeous in the morning sunrise.



To our delight, the trail headed down or was relatively flat for the first three hours of hiking. That made for easy miles in our quest to cross Selden pass. We soon got to the South Fork of the San Joaquin River. We crossed on sturdy bridges.



The mountains above us showed evidence of past glaciation.



We soon entered the John Muir Wilderness. I love how the trail is often lined with pine cones.

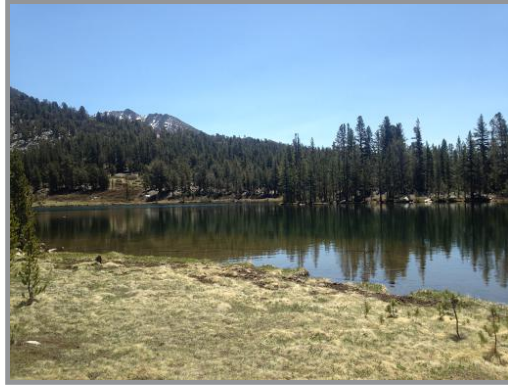


As we climbed toward Selden pass, the view of the surrounding peaks got better and better.



We stopped to get water about halfway up, and a gentleman came hiking from the pass. We asked for directions to Vermillion Valley Ranch (VVR), and he showed us a map to get there via the Bear Creek Trail. He also offered to host us at his home when we get to Sierra City or Belden! His name is Tom Long. On the way up we passed the beautiful Sallie Keys lakes. There were good sized trout in the outlet stream and feeding in the lake.





By 12:30 we made it to the top. The elevation was 10,877 feet. I got a picture of Willy at the top.



The difficulty with this climb was the three or four false summits. It's always disappointing to think you're to the top only to find another climb ahead!

On the way down, we realized that it was only three miles until we would have to ford Bear Creek. This creek has been described as "one of the wildest river crossings on the Pacific Crest Trail ... and is often cited as the most dangerous crossing." Willy and I didn't talk much for the next hour as we contemplated the crossing.

When we finally arrived at Bear Creek, we watched a group of hikers cross the river. Although the current was strong, the water only came up halfway between the knee and waist. We took it slow and made it across without mishap. This is what the crossing looked like.





We hiked until 4:30 and found a great campsite right next to Bear Creek.



I am camped tonight at PCT mile 872.6. The elevation here is 8,763 feet.

## Day 48 - Resupply at Vermillion Valley Resort

Thursday, June 04, 2015

Tuesday June 2

I modified my resupply plan, which means exiting the trail and picking up more food at the Vermillion Valley Resort. As I mentioned yesterday, we planned to follow the Bear Creek trail seven miles and then hike the Edison Lake trail to the road leading to the resort.

To me, this was a bit scary because we only had a photo of a map. None of our electronic GPS maps could help us should we lose our way. In addition, we knew nothing about the condition of the trail. Would it be overgrown or encumbered with blown-down trees? Truly this was an adventure.

We broke camp at 6. The trail followed Bear Creek. It was a beautiful hike as the river had multiple waterfalls and crystal clear pools. Along the way there were several old trees growing on what looked like solid rock.



We assumed that it would take us 2 1/2 hours to reach the trail to Edison Lake. As it turned out, we made it to the trail by 8.



The Edison Lake trail went over a 600 foot ridge and then dropped down to the road leading to the resort. It was almost three miles long. When we got over the ridge, we could see the lake, or at least the lake bed. The prolonged drought has left little water.



Once on the road, we walked another three miles to the resort. We got there just in time for breakfast! The sausage and egg burrito was wonderful! You can't imagine how hungry you get just eating one main meal a day while on the trail. We rented a room and washed our clothes. The shower also was delightful. I had to set up my tent to dry it out because I had frost on the inside when I broke camp this morning. I also aired out my sleeping bag. By noon it was time for lunch. The large hamburger and fries were delightful. I bought three days of food to get me to Mammoth, and packaged it up. To celebrate, I also got a six pack of beer. The resort handles the bills by keeping a tab on everything that is purchased. That includes the room rental, food, supplies, telephone, and laundry. It is difficult to know just how much has been spent. And most things are expensive because it is many miles to the "real" world. They even have satellite internet. I broke down and bought an hour of wi-fi. I was at least able to post my location on Facebook. It cost \$8! Tomorrow we plan to take the ferry across the lake to save about four miles of hiking around the lake. This is the view of the lake from the resort. You can see a little blue sliver of the lake.



This has been a nice but expensive break. However, my tummy is very happy tonight!

## Day 49 - Silver Pass

Thursday, June 04, 2015

Wednesday June 3

I was prone to accidents today. I slipped on a wet rock, cut my hand and ended up in the creek. Twice I tried to rock-hop over streams, lost my balance, and ended up knee deep in the water. One of those times my leg hit a sharp rock, tore my pants and skinned my leg. It's not pretty.



The day started with a wonderful breakfast at the Vermillion Valley Resort. Willy and I paid our bills and then got a boat ride across Lake Edison. It saved us about two hours of hiking.



We got back to the PCT by 9:30 and headed towards Silver Pass, about six miles away. Silver Pass is another major pass for through hikers as it is just under 11,000 feet.

On the way up, there were amazing views of the surrounding mountains. The trail followed Silver Pass Creek, which flows from Silver Pass Lake. Halfway up we met two younger guys coming down from the pass. They warned us that the snowfields on the north side of the pass were prone to a lot of post holing. That did not make us very happy.

The hike up to Silver Pass is frustrating because there are several false summits. We arrived at the pass at 1:30. There were several other hikers taking a break at the top.



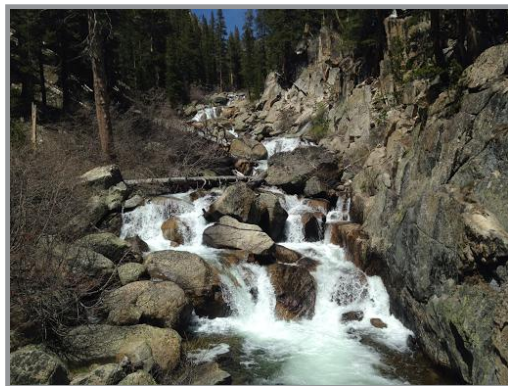


One guy had a really nice digital SLR camera and expensive telephoto lens. He had dropped them into a creek and water got into everything. I guess I wasn't the only one having a bad day!

On the way down we managed to avoid most of the post holing, much to our relief. If you look closely, you can see the tracks coming down from the pass.

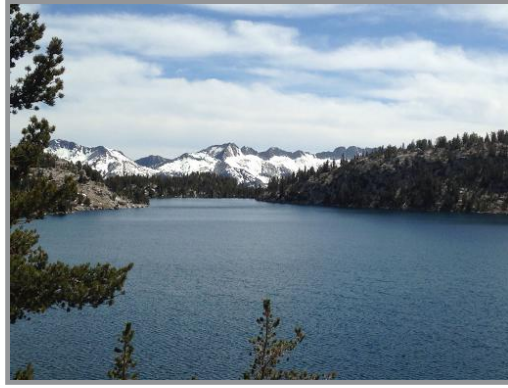


The trail went down into the valley and then headed up again, following Fish Creek. There were wonderful waterfalls.



When we passed by Lake Virginia, there was a great view of the mountains to the south.





We finally stopped for the day and found our campsites near Purple Lake. Willy gave me some antibiotic cream to put on the scrape on my leg. Tomorrow we hope to hike to Reds Meadow and make our way into Mammoth for more resupply and rest. Willy is meeting some friends. Also we hear that rain is forecast for the next few days. I am camped at PCT mile 893.5. The elevation here is 9,916 feet.

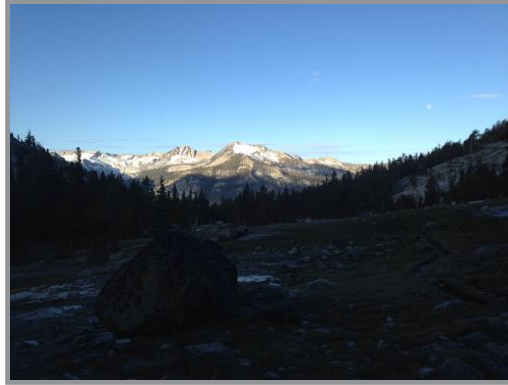
## Day 50 - Resupply at Mammoth Lakes

Thursday, June 04, 2015

Thursday June 4

Although there was a possibility of rain last night, it didn't happen. There was a full moon that gave our camp an eerie light all night long.

Willy and I got on the trail a little before six. We had a slight climb before the trail headed down towards Reds Meadow. The mountains in the morning light looked gorgeous.



After a few hours of hiking, we passed the 900 mile point.



As we approached Reds Meadow, there was an area with trees that had been through an intense wind storm. Most had been snapped off by the wind.



By 10:30 we reached Reds Meadow. Of course we headed to the cafe for breakfast!



We got a ride from Willy's friends to Mammoth Lake. We rented a room for two nights at Motel 6.

We then went shopping. I bought a new pair of pants to replace the pair I tore during my fall.

We got beer and pizza and watched the NBA basketball playoffs.

It feels good to be in town, especially since the weather has turned rainy tonight.

## Comments

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

June 04, 2015

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Hope that you're able to get some R&R in town. Enjoy the pizza and beer while you can get it!!!! :)

## Day 51 - Mammoth Lakes day of rest

Friday, June 05, 2015

Friday June 5

A day of rest is wonderful! Willy and I have a room at the Motel 6 in Mammoth Lakes, California. We didn't have to get up at first light. There was a warm shower and easy agenda for today. I loved laying on my bed, browsing the internet and eating lots of town food!

I went through my resupply boxes and am taking seven dinners and two days of snacks. That's enough food to get me to Toulumne Meadows, where I can buy five more days of snacks to get me to Northern Kennedy Meadows.

For those who are interested, I made the mistake in my initial food planning, thinking that I would cook two meals a day. In reality, I only cook one meal a day, so I always have too much food in the boxes being shipped to me. I'll explain more in just a bit.

I have six or seven extra dinners in my resupply boxes, which I plan to give to Willy's friends (Josh and Jay). They plan to do some hiking later next week and need some light weight food. Willy's friends are the ones who are providing us transportation to and from the trail.

I mailed my micro-spikes back home. The micro-spikes worked really well on the icy slopes. They went on the shoes quickly and could be worn while walking over rocky patches as well and had decent traction. The micro-spikes were much better than "real" crampons in my opinion. Willy had crampons. They were heavier to carry, did not have good traction on rocks, and were dangerous. Willy tore up his pants and gaiters twice while wearing them. The micro-spikes shouldn't be needed, however, for the rest of the trip and I don't want to carry the extra weight.

Willy and I also did a bit of grocery shopping. I needed some olive oil and Willy wanted to make some tortilla-wrapped hot dogs. I add olive oil to all my dinners for extra calories. The supermarket (Vons) had everything we needed.

Back at the room we packed our food and Willy tested out his tortilla-hotdog. It was good. We also saw our first bear! It was walking through the trees next door to the motel.



There have been thunder storms all afternoon.



Rain or shine we will be back on the trail tomorrow morning and we want to be in Toulumne Meadows by Monday afternoon.  
Boy, it sure is nice to lay in bed for a day!



By the way, when I started the hike 51 days ago, I weighed 173 pounds. When I weighed myself at Vermillion Valley Resort two days ago, I was down to 153 pounds. I have already lost 20 pounds!

The question often asked of me is, "Why don't you eat more?"

The answer is, "I would, if I could carry more, but I can't."

Hiking like I do requires about 5,000 calories per day. The food I eat gives me at most 3,000 calories.

I try to find the most calorie-dense food as possible. However, a day's worth of food weighs about two pounds. And food is a significant portion of the weight that I have to carry.

In the morning, I like to start out by eating a pastry which gives me carbohydrates and sugar for energy. I can eat the pastry while walking so I don't have to wait to cook a meal. During the rest of the day, I eat snacks like Snickers and Payday bars, pepperoni, Skittles, cheese and fig bars. I like these snacks, they are easy to find at most convenience stores and most importantly, they can be eaten while walking.

At the end of the day, I eat one major meal that requires me to use my stove. My favorite meals are Mountain House meals or Idahoan Loaded Mashed Potatoes. To these I often add Fritos, cheese, summer sausage and/or olive oil for extra flavor and calories. I just boil water, add it to the meal and let it rehydrate in a plastic bag. I can set up camp while the food is rehydrating. There are no dishes to wash and it is simple to do.

The "once a day cooking" also maximizes the use of fuel, so I can use one small canister of fuel for over two weeks (approximately 16 two-cup boils).



As you can see, I try to keep moving as long as possible during the day. That's how you make the most miles, which is what a long-distance hiker is trying to do. When I get to a town, I try to make up for the lost calories by eating as much as possible. The daily lifestyle sounds crazy, but trying to hike 2,600 miles in five months is a bit crazy too! This crazy hiker is already more than a third of the way to his goal!

## Comments

- [SteveE](#)

June 06, 2015

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Hey Bob

A calorie consideration. Hammer Nutrition make energy products for endurance athletes. One of them, Perpetuem, is calories for loooong events. I've had friends use it as their main food source on long sea kayak expeditions. It's a powder and they'd make it into a paste and consume it throughout the day. It can also be added to a water bottle. If you have an address I can send some to one of your re supply stops for you to try.

Thanks for sharing your adventure.

Steve

- [valoriez](#)

June 06, 2015

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Bobby, do you need me to remove some of the food before sending it to you? Or do you like having the extra to give/trade with people.

- [Jeni](#)

June 07, 2015

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Great information you're sharing- thank you!  
Sure, some may say hiking 2,600 in five months is crazy but, we like your kind of crazy!  
Stay crazy and safe... and keep sharing; we enthusiastically await every new entry!

- [Debra](#)

June 09, 2015

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Good job bob! The pictures are amazing and I'm sure being there is a thousand times more beautiful.

- [Debra](#)

June 09, 2015

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I know marathoners use something called gu energy gel, I don't know if it is any better than the stuff you currently have but if you see it you might want to take a peak.

- [AnneEZJones](#)

June 11, 2015

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You having a full belly makes me smile with a tear in my eye.

Missing and thinking of you often, Daddy!

a

- [AnneEZJones](#)

June 11, 2015

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Ron was asking me today if we should vacuum pack some easy meals for you and get an address where mom is sending a box. Maybe some yummy chocolate/truffles. We

just had our Salmon menu! We could have made you wonderful delicious fatty fish to you. Organic or something like that. You say the word and Ron and I are ON IT!!!! 20 pounds is a LOT for you to lose, Dad! Healthy fish jerkery sounds yummy, huh? or maybe so Devine jerkery? We are starting to get great weather here and the gardens are bouncin! If you've been craving something you haven't seen in Cali, let us know where to send it!

a

- AnneEZJones

June 11, 2015

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Over 800 miles! Dad, you are one truly inspiring man. Nearly every post from Footloose you gain more and more points! I think by the time you get home you will have the ability to hover around where ever you want to go. You'll have to teach me how to fly one of these days when you get home. It is so beautiful in every picture you post. It's really hard not to want to be there and hike a little with you (if (Of course I would have a car to drive town to town. I'm not ever be ready to hike the 30+ days you do. You hike as many miles in this trip per day as I do driving to work. And I get tired from just DRIVING! I have a superhero for a Dad! I might be able to work with that!! ;)

a

- PatchesPal

June 15, 2015

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Bob,  
It's great reading your posts and looking at the pictures. It really brings back memories of my through hike in 2013. I see you found the same thing I did about eating pastries while you hike in the morning.

## Day 52 - Island Pass

Monday, June 15, 2015

Saturday June 6

Mammoth Lakes was a great place to rest, but today we returned to the trail. Willy's friends, Jay and Josh, arrived at our motel room at 6:30 and we took them to breakfast at the Breakfast Club restaurant.

They delivered us to the trail at 8:30. We all took pictures and said our goodbyes. From left to right, Jay, Willy, and Josh.



Willy and I immediately took the wrong trail and walked for 15 minutes before discovering our error. Of course we had to walk back uphill to find the PCT, which, by the way, was very poorly marked.

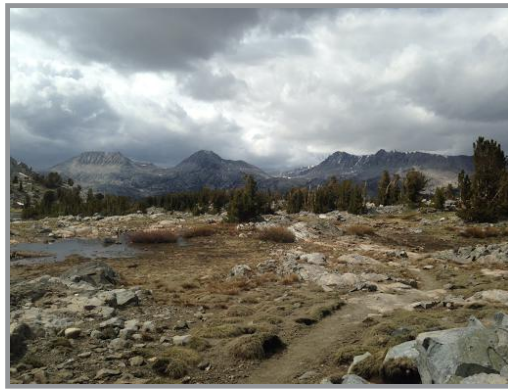
Our plan for today was to hike 15 to 20 miles so that tomorrow we can cross Donohue Pass before thunderstorms develop. The recent weather pattern starts with clear skies in the mornings, but by 11 AM, thunderstorms develop over the higher mountains. Donohue Pass is the northernmost point on the PCT over 11,000 feet, and we don't want to have to worry about storms at that altitude.

With our confused start, we lost a half hour of hiking time. Fortunately the trail was easy walking and we moved quickly. We decided to take the PCT High Trail rather than the John Muir Trail alternate. The trail crossed the road at the Agnew Meadow Trail Head. This is the first road on the PCT since Kennedy Meadows.

The trail climbed steadily and gained almost 3,000 feet. It made for tired legs. By mid afternoon we arrived at Thousand Island Lake.



We finally headed over Island Pass at 10,224 feet.



We were getting tired and headed toward an established campsite a mile down the other side of the pass. There was an approaching thunderstorm, so we made camp quickly. I ended up eating my dinner in my tent as the rain pelted down!

It's interesting that I never used my umbrella. I saw some people using an umbrella in the desert to provide shade, but for me it was never really hot enough to want to use mine. It also might be because I had well-ventilated clothing. Both my shirt and pants were from Rail Riders. Both had built in mesh to allow for good air flow. Also, the only time it rained on me, my raincoat and rain pants were sufficient to keep me dry and the rain didn't last very long. Had I known that we were going to have a cool spring in the desert, I would have sent it to Cascade Locks and not carried it through the desert.

I am camped at PCT mile 925.9. The elevation here is 9,627 feet.

## Day 53 - Donohue Pass

Monday, June 15, 2015

Sunday June 7

I have good days and not-so-good days. Today was a not-so-good day because I didn't have much energy. I don't know if I'm fighting off a cold, but I also had a mild headache all day.

Our goal today was to get over Donohue Pass before the thunderstorms developed. The day started with cloudless skies, but it was obvious that clouds would develop over the mountains again.

Because there were clear skies in the early morning, there was frost. Our first stream crossing involved walking across a log with rushing water below. Halfway across, I realized that there was frost on the log; my feet were starting to slide! Fortunately I used my trekking pole to stabilize myself and was able to scramble off without mishap.

On the way up there were some amazing views of the mountains.



As we approached the pass, I started to feel the effects of the elevation again. My legs had no energy and I couldn't catch my breath. I told Willy to go on ahead as I suffered up the slope. I finally reached the top at 8:30. There were a couple of other hikers at the top.



On the way down it was difficult to find the trail because it was covered by snow. Fortunately we followed tracks in the snow and found the trail as we moved below the snow line. The trail descends 2,000 feet into Lyell Canyon and my legs began to feel like spaghetti.

Once on the valley floor, the trail descended gradually for ten miles. There were



countless meadows along the way and a crystal clear river.

Willy led the way, but I couldn't keep up with him. At times I couldn't even see him ahead on the trail. My legs just didn't have energy today. We met two Forest Rangers who were on their way up to Donohue Pass. They were interested in our through hike, but didn't ask to see our permits.

We finally arrived at Tuolumne Meadows at 12:30.



We then had a long road walk to get to the store.



We bought supplies for five days to get us to Northern Kennedy Meadows. The store did not have a good variety of snacks, but I found enough to get by. We both bought lunch next door at the small restaurant.

Now, let me talk a bit about sleeping clothes. I brought a set of Marino wool long-sleeve tops and full-length bottoms. I also have a Smartwool beanie cap. Finally, I started with a pair of Darn Tough socks. I never wear my sleeping clothes while hiking. They are reserved as "dry" clothes should everything else be wet

At night, I layer the tops and bottoms with other clothes to stay warm. I often wear my hiking pants and just pull the leggings over them. I do the same with the tops, and also wear my down jacket and flannel shirt as well. This usually keeps me warm enough, although on some sub-freezing mornings I still feel cold.

I swapped out my Darn Tough socks with a pair of wool Wigwam socks. The Darn Tough socks did not keep my feet warm enough.

I like my sleeping clothes now. I always keep them stuffed in my sleeping bag ready to put on as I fluff up my sleeping bag and get ready for bed.

I am camped tonight at the Tuolumne Meadows Campground, approximately PCT mile 942.4. The elevation here is 8,419 feet.

## Day 54 - Matterhorn Creek

Monday, June 15, 2015

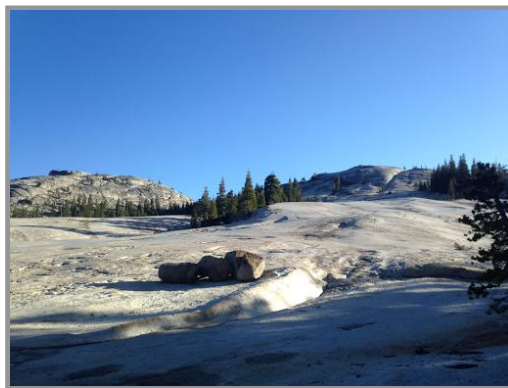
Monday June 8

Last night about 20 PCT through hikers gathered around a campfire nearby and had s'mores. Randy took lots of pictures, some of which should show up on the Facebook Class of 2015 page. Everyone had a good time, although a few stayed up past hiker midnight (9 PM).

Willy and I were on the trail before 6. We crossed a large meadow and had great views of the surrounding mountains.



In places the trail crossed large glacially polished slabs of rocks.



The trail crossed the Tuolumne River and followed it for several miles.



The river cascaded over several waterfalls.



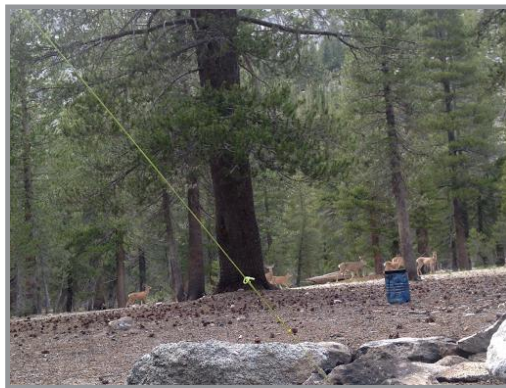
We traveled for several miles through forest meadows.



Today there were several creeks that we had to wade across. The deepest was just below my knee.



We decided to stop early near Matterhorn Creek, having walked over twenty miles today. I am still feeling really tired; my legs just don't seem to have the energy that others have. I took advantage of our early stop. I took a nap and then noticed the deer near my tent.



We have now entered the area some call "mosquito hell". There are definitely more of the critters. When I mentioned it to Willy, he tried to find his mosquito head net, but thinks he may have thrown it away! I offered him my Deet if they get too bad.

Now to reflect on some of my gear. I wore sun gloves through the desert. Sun gloves are light weight gloves that protect the hands from exposure to be sunlight. The fingertips are exposed to allow for better gripping and use of the fingertips. I stopped using them when I entered the high Sierras, but that was a mistake. My right hand got a bad sunburn because it is exposed to the sun as I use my trekking pole. The only negatives are that they tend to get very dirty, are hard to clean, and are annoying if they get wet. I often take them off while preparing dinner to avoid contamination. I am glad I bought them and will continue to use them as long as there is sunny weather.

I am camped at PCT mile 963.4. The elevation here is 8,436 feet.



## Day 55 - Two Passes & a River Crossing

Monday, June 15, 2015

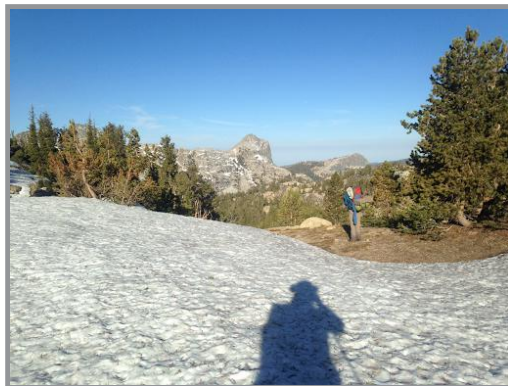
Tuesday June 9

Kerrick Creek is one of the most dangerous creek crossings on the trail. The water is deep and fast. Our goal today was to make it to the creek and safely cross it.

The morning was beautiful with blue skies and sunlight touching the mountain tops.



We had a long climb to Benson Pass at 10,094 feet. There was a large snowfield at the top.



I was not feeling well this morning, so the climb was a struggle. I felt "clammy hot" even while coming down from the pass. Poor Willy had to put up with my slow pace.

The trail basically goes from one river drainage to the next. So we went up to Benson Pass, down to Plute Creek, up to Seavey Pass, and down to Kerrick Creek. We also had to wade across three creeks, which means wet feet most of the day.

When we got to Kerrick Creek, we were both tired. Fortunately we picked a spot to cross that had some large boulders to steady ourselves, and we crossed without incident.

There was a nice campsite near the river so we stopped for the day. It looks like it might rain tonight, so I am comfy in my tent.

Gear review: Digital camera I purchased a touch-screen digital camera with 21 optical zoom. I could recharge it with my battery backup via a USB cable. I carried the camera in a pouch on my backpack waist strap.

What I found was that it was much easier to use my iPhone, which I kept in my pants pocket. The pictures were more readily accessible for my blog and I didn't have to fool



around with transferring photos from my camera to my phone.

Midway through the desert, my digital camera started making odd beeping noises, even though it was turned off! By the time I got to the Sierras, the camera battery had died. When I recharged it, the zoom lens malfunctioned. I decided to send it home along with my tripod.

The digital camera took wonderful high resolution pictures. I probably would have done better with a more robust camera that could handle the rigors of day to day hiking.

It remains to be seen if I am happy with the iPhone picture quality. All I know at this point is that the convenience of the iPhone is most important.

I am camped at PCT mile 980.3. The elevation here is 7,913 feet.

## Day 56 - Rainstorm at Dorothy Lake

Monday, June 15, 2015

Wednesday June 10

It didn't rain last night, so I got to pack up a dry tent. The plan for today was to hike about 15 miles. We have three days of food left and about 38 miles until we reach Northern Kennedy Meadows, our next resupply point. If we hike 15 today and 15 tomorrow, that will leave 8 miles on the last day to get to the highway and hitch to Kennedy Meadows Resort.

The skies were cloudy when we got on the trail. It looked like a typical cloudy day in Seattle.

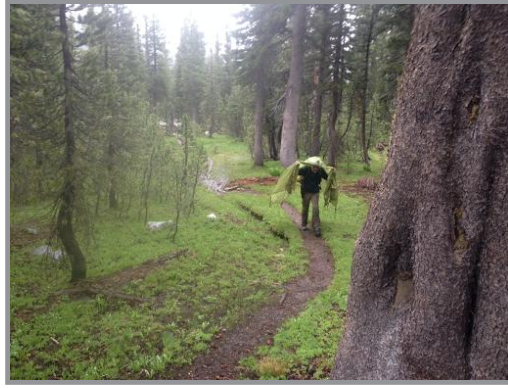


We finished two climbs and two descents by ten. On our last descent we met a Korean man with the trail name "Thermometer". He speaks very little English. We helped him find the trail at a trail crossing and he followed us for over five miles. He carries what appears to be a very heavy pack. At one trail junction, he pointed to a PCT emblem posted on a tree and said, "Sign?" "Yes", I replied, "sign for the PCT." He repeated the word several times as he hiked up the trail.

We had to ford three different rivers today. It is almost expected now to have to ford a river after we descend into a valley. We have wet feet every day now.



During the morning, the slight drizzle that had started turned into a steady rain. Willy used his tent rain fly as a makeshift poncho.



Since we had hiked 17 miles today, we decided to make camp early. It is definitely interesting putting up a tent in the rain. I put everything in the tent and even rigged the tent "beak". My raincoat and rain pants are drippy-wet, along with my shoes, socks and hat.

I cooked my dinner while sitting in the tent. Hopefully the rain will end before morning. I have my "dry clothes" on, but it's very humid in the tent already with lots of droplets on the inside of the tent. It will be "fun" putting on wet clothes tomorrow morning!

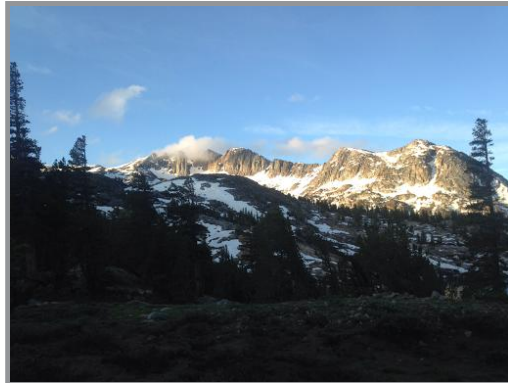
We are camped near Dorothy Lake at PCT mile 997.2. The elevation here is 9,472 feet.

## Day 57 - Sonora Pass

Monday, June 15, 2015

Thursday June 11

The rain continued into the night, with large raindrops hitting the tent. I was worried that it would still be raining in the morning, but when I looked out I saw clearing skies!



We headed toward Sonora Pass. Our goal today was to make it within 8 miles or less of highway 108 (Sonora Pass), with the intent to hitch to Kennedy Meadows Resort the next morning.

Our tents were wet along with our rain gear and hiking clothes. My shoes were still soggy too. It was rather chilly putting on all that damp gear!

Within the first hour of hiking, we had to ford three different creeks, so it didn't matter if my shoes and socks were dry to begin with.

We quickly crossed Dorothy Lake Pass and then descended to the river valley at 8,500 feet. On the way down we passed the 1,000 mile mark on the PCT!

From the valley we had an enormous climb that took us above tree-line. It finally topped out at 10,860 feet. The trail followed the ridge line for several miles, crossing snowfields, some with considerable exposure should a misstep take place. Of course there were fantastic views.



In my opinion, this was one of the hardest days of hiking due to the many changes in elevation along with the snow conditions. This picture shows one of the many snowfields that we had to cross.



We had hoped to camp about 8 miles before Sonora Pass, but there were no camping spots due to the snow and steep terrain. Instead we hiked all the way to highway 108 at Sonora Pass.

We spent an hour trying to hitch a ride. Finally a kind fellow stopped and drove us right to the resort!

Willy and I have a room above the lobby for \$35 each that includes showers and laundry! I picked up my resupply box and we finished our resupply shopping. Of course we had a great meal at the restaurant! We plan to hitch back to the trail tomorrow morning after a good breakfast at the restaurant.

I am currently staying at Kennedy Meadows Resort- PCT mile 1018.4.



## Day 58 - Change in Landscape

Monday, June 15, 2015

Friday June 12

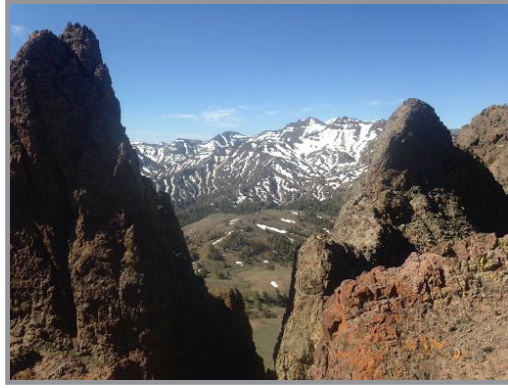
I was proud of myself. I hadn't got my shoes wet all day. The little creek was going to be easy to cross. Just step carefully on the log and scramble up the other side. I got to the other side, but during the scramble my water bottle fell into the pool below. It started to swirl around. Before I could grab it, the current sucked it downstream! I jumped in and chased it, jabbing at it with my trekking pole. It finally slowed in a deeper pool and I grabbed it. When I looked up, Willy was speechless! At least I still had my water bottle! Today was a good day. It started with eggs, sausage and pancakes at the Kennedy Meadows restaurant. Willy and I tried to find a ride from the folks at the resort, but no one was available. We hiked out to the main road. I held up a sign that said, "Sonora Pass" and we tried to hitch a ride. Finally a couple that were camping nearby turned onto the highway and gave us a ride.



At the Sonora Pass trailhead, there was a trail angel. This guy was the same one that I saw on the news many months ago! We both got chocolate chip cookies with whipped cream and a cherry! We also got our pictures taken by his banner.



We got back on the trail at 8:30. We had a 1,200 foot climb to the top of the ridge at 10,860 feet. Of course there were beautiful views.



The trail then dropped down to follow the East Fork of the Carson River. On the north slopes of the ridge, the trail disappeared under the snow. There were tracks going everywhere. We checked our maps and headed down. We post-holed a few times and I fell through into a rushing creek under the snow. My leg jammed against a sharp rock. I now have a new gash just below my left knee!

We finally got below the snow line and spent the rest of the day in forests. I just love hiking through these forests. When I stopped and listened, all I could hear was the wind whispering through the boughs above. It was splendid!

The topography is changing really quickly. Where there used to be only jagged granite peaks, now there are lots of volcanic rock. We passed this huge volcanic outcropping.



My only complaint today, other than the new gash on my leg, was that my olive oil bottle leaked in my food container. I tried to wipe it up, but here in the woods options are limited.

I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1036.9. The elevation here is 9,210 feet.

## Day 59 - Trail Angel "Legend"

Monday, June 15, 2015

Saturday June 13

"I'm ready to quit the trail!" I threw down my pack and slumped to the ground.

What should have been an easy morning of hiking had turned into a nightmare of trying to put one foot in front of the other. My legs seem to be getting weaker as time goes by, not stronger.

And then "Legend" showed up. He had juice, beef stew, rice and bread! He served us as if we were special guests. He has been a trail angel since 2002, and he was there to bring comfort when it was most needed.



He doesn't know it, but he just kept a hiker on the trail, at least for one more day!

I knew right away this morning that something wasn't right. I was following Willy when we came to a small hill. Willy seemed to easily walk up it, but I immediately fell behind. I couldn't keep a steady pace and fell further and further behind. Just before noon, I was really struggling. Willy was no where to be seen. Mentally, I was beat and ready to quit the trail.

A man walking up the trail said, "You must be Bobaroo. Your friend is waiting five minutes down the trail." When I got to where Willy was, I met Legend.

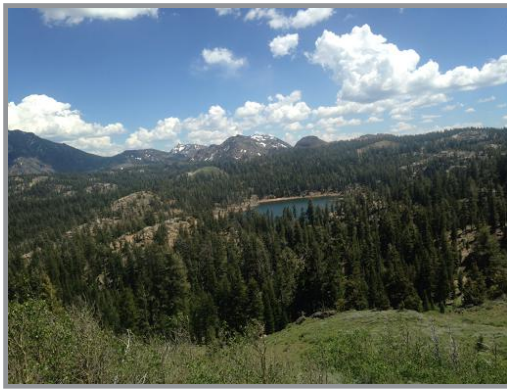
I wish I knew what was wrong with me. I don't have a fever or stomach problems. I've had a runny nose since I started this hike almost two months ago, but that doesn't seem to have any correlation to my energy level. I am baffled.

This afternoon we hiked for a few more hours before Willy made me stop to camp. I hope more rest will help me for tomorrow.

There are many beautiful flowers blooming.



And the views are still wonderful.



I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1055. The elevation here is 8,460 feet.

## Day 60 - Bobaroo got his Mojo back

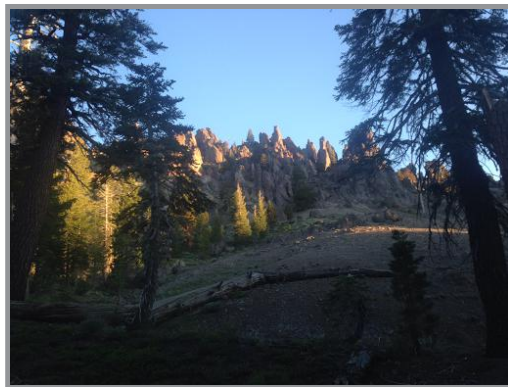
Monday, June 15, 2015

Sunday June 14

I was hiking up a long climb. A young lady named "Twinkle Toes" was 200 yards ahead. She is a strong hiker. Yet, I was gaining on her! As one hiker stated as I passed him on the trail, "Bobaroo, you got your mojo back!"

What a difference a day makes. Yesterday I was ready to quit the trail. Today I'm happy and loving it! My legs felt strong all day. I was able to make the climbs with relative ease. I don't know what the difference was between yesterday and today, but I hope every day is like today.

The mountains are almost all volcanic rock. The peaks are lovely.



One of the peaks is called "the nipple".



About four miles down the trail, we saw a sign that said, "Trail Magic 300 Steps". When Willy and I got there, we were treated to sodas, pulled pork sandwiches, pasta salad and chips! It was wonderful!





The terrain now has more rolling hills with forests, meadows and lakes. There are fewer streams than in the high Sierras, but water hasn't been an issue yet.



When we got to Carson Pass, the Information Center had snacks, drinks and fruit for the PCT hikers! More trail magic!



We hiked for another couple of hours. We passed several meadows. This one had a couple of buildings.



We found a nice campsite near a beautiful lake. We have 9 more miles before we reach our next resupply point, Echo Lake Resort or South Lake Tahoe. We get to sleep in an extra hour tomorrow morning!

What a wonderful day!

I am camped at PCT mile 1084. The elevation here is 8,781 feet.

## Comments

- [valoriez](#)

June 15, 2015

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Soooo good to hear your voice on the phone, and to hear about your continued adventures! Will you be sending your umbrella home since you aren't using it? I love you.

- [valoriez](#)

June 15, 2015

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Good to hear you figured out a solution to "sleeping cold". That sounds not restful, and it uses calories too! You need those calories for hiking energy. Do you think you are getting enough B vitamins? You're used to eating whole grains and veggies, and not getting much of either, I think. Love ya, Valorie

- [valoriez](#)

June 15, 2015

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I hope you have \*your\* mosquito net! And I'm glad to hear that you have DEET. Is it working for you? I love you, Valorie

- [valoriez](#)

June 15, 2015

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Your pictures are gorgeous! So the iPhone is doing a good job. Are you wading the creeks with socks and shoes on, then walking through snow with wet feet!? I can't imagine doing what you are doing. But gosh, you are walking through beautiful country. I love you, Valorie

- [Jeni](#)

June 15, 2015

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I was going to ask about your camera so, I am really glad you covered it here. Valorie is right- absolutely gorgeous pictures, Bob! I find some images stick with me long after I've read one of your blog entries- like the old growth tree on Day 48, that's a stunning image if I've ever seen one! Stay safe and keep 'shooting', keep sharing and by all means, keep walking! :)

- [MichaellIrving](#)

June 16, 2015

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I also like the sun gloves (treated with permethrin) as bug barriers too. They are a tad dirty ver time as you mention though!

-GoalTech

- [MichaellIrving](#)

June 16, 2015

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I agree with you on the phone. Try Pro HDR app. It's wonderful for high contrast challenges with many outdoor pictures. You have to hold very still though when using it. Check it out.

-GoalTech

## Day 61 - South Lake Tahoe

Monday, June 15, 2015

Monday June 15

A "town day" for hikers means "town food". Today, Willy and I were headed to South Lake Tahoe. We needed to get supplies for the next 105 miles of hiking. Plus, we were going to take an extra day for rest.

Although we were going to "sleep in" an extra hour before hitting the trail, we ended up sleeping only a half hour longer before getting onto the trail. It was just 9 miles to the highway. By 8:30 we could see the lake in the distance.



At highway 50, Willy didn't have phone service; I had marginal service. We were unable to call for a ride. However, when Willy was walking by the highway, a trail angel (Mel) was driving by, saw Willy, and offered us a ride to town! In addition, our friend, "Thermometer", the fellow from Korea, was also in the car!

We stopped at the local outfitters for some supplies and then got a room at the Apex Inn, which was just up the street.



We then had a big breakfast at Bert's Cafe. Nothing tastes better than town food after four days on the trail!

Willy offered to do our laundry while I showered. I then mailed my bear canister home, since it is no longer required. Also, it weighs almost two pounds, so it is weight I won't have to carry any more.

At 4, two of Willy's sisters arrived, Carmen and Alice, along with Larry, Carmen's husband.



We went for dinner at the Hard Rock Cafe at Harvey's Casino. We had a great meal and amazing dessert! Everyone was interested in our adventure and lots of stories were shared.

I really like everyone in Willy's family. We plan to have breakfast together tomorrow and they offered to take me to a shoe store as well. I thought my shoes would last 800 miles, but the Sierra granite and volcanic rock have already worn holes in my shoes. I just love town days like this!

## Comments

- PaulZimmerman

June 15, 2015

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It's really great to hear from you again, Dad! I'm glad that you're feeling better, it sounds like you had a rough section of the trail that took a toll on you. I hope you're able to keep your mojo as you progress. It is amazing how far that you've already made it during these last couple of months--you're doing an amazing job! Enjoy the extra rest...hopefully you consider taking even more rest if you think your body needs it! Love you!

- valoriez

June 15, 2015

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Precious few of those cloudy days or any rain in the last month or so! Summer is really early this year. We've had lots of 80+ days. The front lawn is already crunchy! Dressing in wet clothes sounds awful. Glad you survived it! Love ya, Valorie

- valoriez

June 15, 2015

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It's terrible to hear that you were feeling bad. I'm so glad that trail magic appeared just when you most needed it! Love ya, Valorie

- valoriez

June 15, 2015

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Yay, Bobby got his mojo back! \o/

- valoriez

June 15, 2015

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Great to hear that you have the shoe problem half-solved. Now, hopefully the shoe store has something suitable. Love ya, Valorie



- SteveE

June 15, 2015

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Hang in there Bob. You're logging lots of miles without much time to let your muscles recover. Working muscles hard can make them stronger, but only if they have a chance to recover. Without recovery time, you'll just wear yourself down. So if you're really feeling rundown and worn out, it's just your body saying it might be time to take a day off, not necessarily time to hang it up. The body part is relatively easy to figure out, and deal with. The mental part can be much harder to overcome, but after all those Boeing years I have total faith in your mental toughness.

Enjoy

- MichaelIrving

June 16, 2015

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I met Thermometer around mile 550 on my sobo section hike in May. He served me up some fancy Korean coffee. Mmmm!  
-GoalTech

## Day 62 - Resting in Lake Tahoe

Tuesday, June 16, 2015

Tuesday June 16

I slept in until 7 AM, although I had hiking dreams of heading uphill. I can't remember exactly, but I woke up a bit tired!

Willy's brother in law, Larry, treated us to breakfast at Bert's Cafe. He then drove us across town to Tahoe Sports. I got a pair of Merrell Moab Ventilator shoes. They feel great and have a wide toe box.



My old shoes, Vasque Pendulum trail running shoes, were supposed to last 800 miles from Kennedy Meadows (south). Unfortunately, the sharp Sierra granite and rocky terrain tore up the sides of the shoes in just 400 miles.



I glued on the small pieces of velcro which hold my gaiters in place. Now my new shoes are ready to go.

This afternoon, Willy and I went to the Outfitters. Willy bought a new ULA Circuit backpack. It is slightly lighter than his old one.

I called a local trail angel and arranged for a ride back to the trail tomorrow morning at 8:30.

We've had a great rest here in South Lake Tahoe and we're ready to hit the trail again!

Now for a bit of gear commentary. For rain gear, I bought Zpack's lightweight and

breathable Challenger jacket. I got the version with armpit zippers for extra ventilation. This is a picture of the coat from their website.



I like the coat because it is very lightweight, and the "eVent" fabric allows water vapor to pass through, as long as it is a cool day.

However, I have one major complaint. The waterproof front zipper is very difficult to get started. I had to try at least a dozen times to get it engaged. It became so bad that I opted NOT to totally unzip the coat. Rather, I left it partially zipped and simply stepped out of it when taking it off. This solution is not satisfactory for me, but at least I can put the coat on without the frustration of trying to engage the zipper. For a coat that costs \$290, I feel that the zipper should function correctly.

I wore this jacket in both snow and rain. When hiking and perspiring heavily, I did get wet from the perspiration, so the "breathability" of the fabric is not 100%, nor is it claimed to be. In the rain, I never wore it long enough to see if it would "wet through", although Zpacks claims the coat to be waterproof. The jacket works extremely well as a windbreaker and the hood has an effective design for rain and wind.

If I had to make a rain jacket purchase again, I would get something with a better front zipper, even if it meant more weight. I don't know if others have experienced this same problem, but it is extremely frustrating for me.

## Comments

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

June 16, 2015

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I hope the new shoes work out well for you and stand up to the miles better than your previous shoes. Good luck on the next leg of your journey--I hope you retain your "mojo"!

## Day 63 - Where's Willy?

Friday, June 19, 2015

Wednesday June 17

Leaving town is always hard. I think it's the food - so good, so yummy, so many calories! Willy and I had breakfast at Bert's Diner before Lailani, a local trail angel, picked us up and returned us to the trail. The help given by trail angels is immensely appreciated. They take time at a moments notice to help complete strangers! Wow!

We headed up the trail at 9. We passed by Echo Lake Resort, which was busy with tourists. There were also a lot of day hikers on the trail. Some were very interested in our through hike, asked a lot of questions, and even took our picture. In this picture you can see both upper and lower Echo Lake.



The trail was pretty easy hiking, but there were a number of trails leading to lakes. On one stretch of the trail, there was a long uphill. I happened to be leading the way and would often pass day hikers. I try to check back every so often to make sure Willy is still within sight. Just after I passed the trail junction to Aloha Lake, I looked back and couldn't see Willy! I figured he had stopped to get water or to heed the call of nature. I waited and waited and waited some more. Where was he?

I checked and discovered that I had phone service, so I called him. No answer.

After waiting 20 minutes, I decided to walk slowly down the trail. Willy is a fast hiker (faster than me); surely he would catch up. I hiked for an hour and still there was no Willy. Finally I was talking to a couple of ladies along the trail and happened to mention my predicament. To my surprise, they said, "Oh, we saw him about half an hour ago. He was coming onto the trail from the Aloha Lake trail. He is AHEAD of you!"

Oh my gosh! How could this have happened? Now Willy is racing up the trail trying to catch up with me and has no idea that I am behind him.

I hiked as fast as I could and kept looking ahead to see if I could spot him. However, with a 30 minute head start, he could be more than a mile ahead. I finally decided that I might have to hike into the evening and check the camping spots along the way.

Finally as I was scurrying up a hill, I spotted him in the distance! I yelled as loud as I could, "Willy!" He heard my screaming!

His explanation is a plausible one. He had fallen behind and slipped on some rocks. When he looked up, he didn't see me. At the trail junction to Aloha Lake, the sign showed that both trails went by the lake. He took the other trail, and I never saw him take it! I guess if something can happen, it will. Fortunately it all ended well!

The only significant climb today was over Dicks Pass, a climb of 1,200 feet. There were good views from the top of the lakes below.



By 4:30 we were both tired. Willy is not accustomed to his new backpack, and I am still breaking in my new shoes. We found some suitable campsites about a half mile from Fontanillis Lake.

I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1111. The elevation here is 8,361 feet. Oh, by the way, did you notice?





## Day 64 - Easy Trail = Big Miles

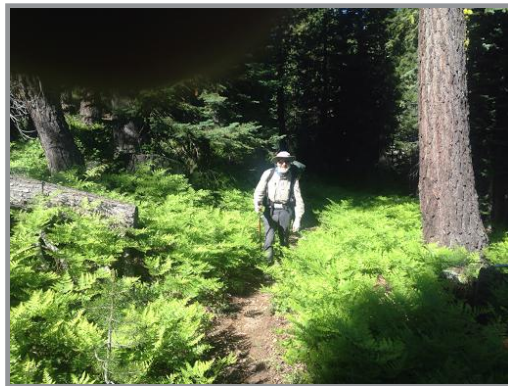
Friday, June 19, 2015

Thursday June 18

This section, from Interstate 50 (Echo Lake) to Sierra City, is about 105 miles. By hiking a little over 20 miles per day, it should take a little over five days. Yesterday, we hiked about 17 miles. Today we hiked 27 miles!

The trail was relatively easy most of the day, so we made lots of miles. Unfortunately, most of the hiking was in the forest, so there weren't a lot of opportunities for great pictures.

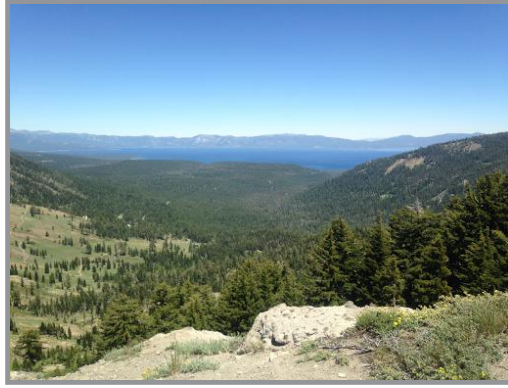
There was an area with lots of bracken ferns, which were pretty in the sunlight.



The trail also passed through areas with lots of blooming flowers. I wish I knew what they are.



The terrain is rolling hills, so the climbs on the trail are usually fairly easy. We climbed to a ridge and could see Lake Tahoe.



Now for a bit of gear review. I have the Thermo-Rest Neoair air mattress. I bought the full-length one. The mattress has internal baffles to aid in improving the insulating properties. The mattress comes with a stuff sack.

I love my mattress. It keeps me insulated from the ground, but just as important, it is comfortable to sleep on. The biggest concern is to ensure that no sharp objects come in contact with the mattress. That means keeping the mattress clean and the surface that it comes in contact with. I try to clean off the tent floor before inflating the mattress. I also always roll it up and store it in its storage bag.

If I were to do it again, I would buy a shorter mattress. My feet could just as easily rest on a stuff sack or my empty backpack. A shorter mattress is lighter and inflates/deflates faster.

Some people complain that the new mattress is "crinkly". The internal baffles make crunching sounds as you move about on the mattress. This was never a problem for me. Perhaps I was just too tired to notice. The crunching sounds seem to go away over time. When I use the mattress, I put my shoes under the top of the mattress to make it elevated. I then use my extra clothes stuff sack as my pillow. It works great!

I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1138.1. The elevation here is 7,438 feet.

## Comments

- JeniR

June 19, 2015

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The picture of you & Willy is great!

And, what an accomplishment- congratulations on surpassing mile 1,100!!!

- valoriez

June 19, 2015

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Hello, you are carrying a \*whistle\* right? No screaming necessary!

Also, once again you are way ahead of schedule, and I'm late sending the boxes to Dunsmuir. (sigh) Tomorrow.....

It's good to hear that you've found Willy who seems to be a good hiking buddy. Hopefully we'll meet in Oregon, or Washington.....

- [BobZimmerman](#)

June 27, 2015

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I think my whistle is partially broken. It makes some sound, but not like it should. Yelling seemed more appropriate since I was so frustrated with what had happened.

- [valoriez](#)

June 28, 2015

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I can see that part, and I was only joking about the whistle. Sort of! It is safety equipment, so if it isn't loud, please replace it!

Love ya,

Valorie

- [AnneEZJones](#)

July 24, 2015

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Silly question just popped into my lil head.... Are these trails stable and secure enough to ride one of those motorized wheelchairs on parts of other PCT? I might have already asked this but my brain is like Swiss cheese- things just disappear or slowly erode away.... Or could one of those people mover things be trail ok? I just haven developed the power to hover yet. Floating or flying would be cool too.... Curious about the conditions of the trails and how consistant they are through.

little a

## Day 65 - Up to the Peter Grubb Hut

Saturday, June 20, 2015

Friday June 19

Today's hiking consisted of a series of 1,200 foot ascents and descents. Willy and I were on the trail before 6. The trail climbed up and passed the west side of the Squaw Valley ski area, which was the site of the 1960 Winter Olympics.

The trail then descended. We had an early morning view of the ridge we would be climbing. The trail eventually passed just 300 feet below Tinker Knob, the left-most flattish topped rock outcropping in the picture.



We passed by several lava rock formations like this one.



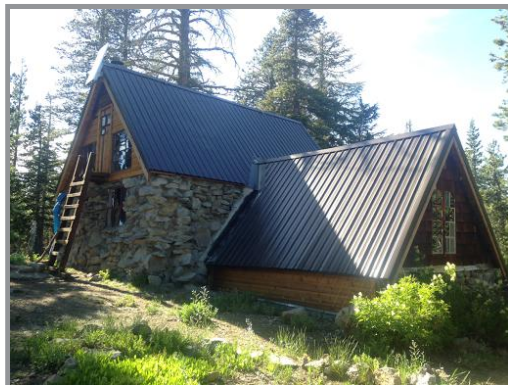
Around noon we arrived at the Sugar Bowl ski area. Willy was out of water, so he asked a man of there was somewhere to buy a drink. The guy drove us to the town of Soda Springs and returned us to the trail! Wow, more unexpected kindness! When we were dropped off, "Whiskers" and "Half-slow" were taking a break. Willy shared some of his chips with them.



After crossing highway 40, it was 3 miles until we reached interstate highway 80. The trail passed under the freeway through several tunnels.



By 4 PM, I was really tired. I seem to be the weak link with my low energy and reduced stamina. I suggested that we camp near the Peter Grubb hut. The hut is owned by the Sierra Club and can be used for shelter.



We camped nearby. Here is my campsite.





I even have a pink flamingo watching over me!



I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1162.9. The elevation here is 7,870 feet.

## Comments

- [valoriez](#)

June 20, 2015

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Yay, the letter carrier picked up your Dunsmuir boxes (no shoes)! So convenient, and actually cheaper. Drink more, eat more, sleep more! Get your mojo back, Bobby! Also, eat some \*vegetables\* for goodness sake. Man cannot live on potatoes alone. I love you, Valorie

PS: Did you see the photos on FB of your Father's Day present from me? <3

- [valoriez](#)

June 20, 2015

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I'm beginning to think you will be cutting wood with us on Labor Day. That might make it difficult to get a cabin up at Stehekin Ranch. We'll see how it goes!

It is really good to be getting timely blog posts again. Much worry off my mind, and I think lots of others too. I met my cousin Jan's daughter who hiked the PCT last year (?) and met her husband there, at the wedding. Hopefully they will find your blog and comment.

- JeniR

June 21, 2015

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Really interesting tunnel system to keep the trail going uninterrupted.

Take Val's advice- drink, eat, sleep! We're all cheering for you and want you to stay strong to continue this amazing journey!!

- BobZimmerman

June 27, 2015

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Aren't loaded mashed potatoes considered as a type of vegetable?

- valoriez

June 28, 2015

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Potatoes = starch! If you eat the skin, it's almost a veggie! Aren't you craving, like, fresh crunchy peas in the pod, carrots, broccoli, crispy fresh peppers? Summer is heaven for fresh fruit and veg. And so good for ya.

I love you,

Valorie

## Day 66 - Rolling Hills covered in Flowers

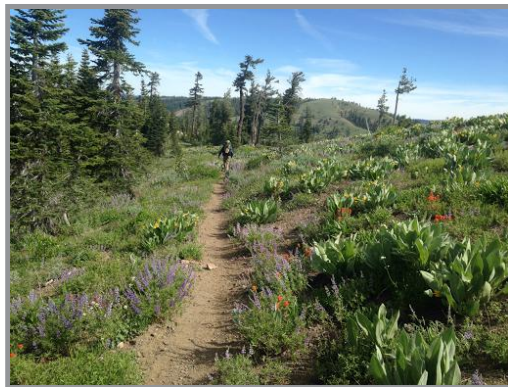
Wednesday, June 24, 2015

Saturday June 20

There were a lot of ups and downs today. Fortunately all were between 600 and 800 feet. The hiking was fast. We had twelve miles by ten o'clock. By the end of the day, we covered 26.3 miles!

It seems like we're in a different "bubble" of people now. As you hike along, you see many of the same people. Today we saw people we've never met before.

The landscape is very similar to what we've seen the past couple of days - rolling hills with tall trees below and open ridges covered with fields of wooly mules ear, Indian paint brush, lupine and an occasional Mariposa lily.



This is a closeup of the flower that Willy says is a Mariposa lily. I just love them!



We are getting close to the exit to Sierra City, but we decided to stop early and get into town tomorrow morning. We could have pushed and arrived tonight, but it would have meant hiking a 35 mile day. We are not in that much of a hurry. Besides, Willy had his passport mailed to the post office, which won't be open until Monday.

It was rather warm today, especially as we descend lower. I would guess it was in the low 80's. I was drinking a lot more water, so I needed to watch where the reliable streams were.

I had a new entrée for dinner tonight - Biscuits and gravy! Add Fritos and Italian salami

and it's a winner! Besides, tonight I got to eat all of the extra food - yummy salami and Fritos.

Now, if I can just keep all of the ants out of the tent, I will be a happy camper. The ants seem to be everywhere so I must be camped near their nest.

I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1189.2. The elevation here is 6,389 feet.

## Day 67 - Sierra City

Wednesday, June 24, 2015

Sunday June 21

Happy Fathers Day! Every year I have been going to the annual "beer festival". My family will be there this year too. They promise to drink a toast to the dad on the trail!

Last night two interesting things happened. First, I think I pitched my tent over an ant colony. Somehow they kept finding their way into my tent. I kept unzipping the screen and tossing them out. It was annoying, to say the least, to feel one crawling across my arm as it was getting dark.

Second, in the middle of the night, I was awakened from a deep sleep by some animal outside the tent. I was so deeply asleep that my muscles wouldn't move, and all I could do was make a slurred "Get out of here!" Fortunately, the beast ran off before I could move around to see what it was. Needless to say, I was wide awake for a while!

Willy and I were on the trail by 5:30. We had a five mile walk to the Plum Creek campground, and then a three mile road walk to Sierra City.



We stopped at the Red Moose Inn for breakfast and also rented a room for night. The two story building in the photo is a restaurant and an inn.



I did our laundry at the RV park. The local grocery store had adequate supplies. I bought enough food for four days on the trail.

I bought a deli sandwich for lunch and had a hamburger at the Red Moose cafe. We had dinner across the street at the Buckhorn Cafe. Did you notice that I had two lunches? Yum!



I had a great Father's Day. I had several Rogue "Dead Guy" beers and I even got to soak in the tub to remove the dirt from my feet!

We offered to share our room with some other hikers, but did not get any takers of our offer.

I was informed that it was "hike naked" day, but by the time I realized it, I was already in town. Sorry, no naked hiking pictures!

We are staying in Sierra City, at the Red Moose Inn, approximately at PCT mile 1197.5.

## Day 68 - Up to the Sierra Buttes

Wednesday, June 24, 2015

Monday June 22

Waiting is difficult. I saw other hikers walking up the street here in Sierra City. They were headed back to the trail. Willy had to wait until 10 for the post office to open to pick up his passport. He needs it to apply for the entry into Canada permit.

On the plus side, we got to sleep in and had a great breakfast at the Red Moose Inn. I also found out that the grocery store had free Wi-Fi, much faster than the Wi-Fi at the Red Moose Inn. I backed up quite a few pictures from my phone.

We finally got to the trail at 10:45. The challenge was to climb 2,700 feet up to the Sierra Buttes. This was made more difficult because we had fully loaded packs with four days of food, extra water to go 12 miles to the first reliable source, and a warm day with temperatures in the 80's! What saved us was great trail design. The trail had lots of switch backs, but the slope was gradual. We were able to keep a steady pace and were at the top in two hours.



The Sierra Buttes lie in an area that was subject to gold mining during the California gold rush in the mid 1800's. We didn't see any mines, but there is a paved road leading to the Sierra Buttes trail head. We saw several day hikers. I also understand that there is a lookout at the top, but we didn't have time to make the detour.

The trail then followed the ridges for several miles and skirts the Plumas National Forest lakes basin. There are many lakes with clear blue water, all nestled in the forest.



We finally decided to camp near Little Jamison spring, since water has been relatively

scarce. I had Macaroni and Cheese for dinner. It was even better when I added Fritos!

Now for a bit of insight into the daily trials and tribulations for hikers. One problem hikers sometimes encounter are little gnats, colloquially known as face gnats. They seem to live near oak trees. The little buggers hover just in front of your face as you walk down the trail and will land on your face if you don't swat them away.

Sometimes there is a cloud of them. I found that if you are able to blow directly on one of them or are able to hit one with your hand, they will fly away. When they are really bad, I would hold my trekking pole in the middle and swing the handle end back and forth in front of my face like a windshield wiper. That kept them away.

One time when a cloud of them was pestering me, I walked really fast and then suddenly stopped. I laughed when the cloud kept going after my sudden stop! I have never been bitten by one but they sure are annoying!

I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1216.3. We managed to hike 18.8 miles, even with our late start. The elevation here is 7,100 feet.

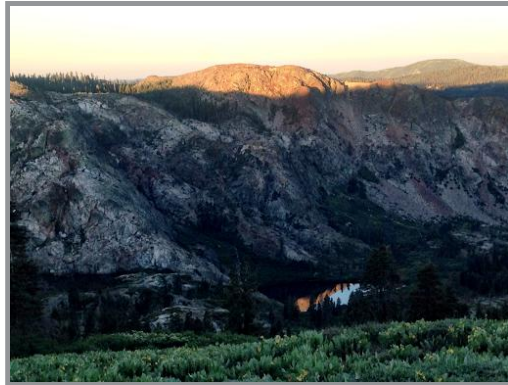
## Day 69 - The Hill Tops have Trees

Wednesday, June 24, 2015

Tuesday June 23

Our campsite near Little Jamison Creek must have been popular. At sundown, three other campers set up their tents. Of course, Willy and I left before any one else was stirring about. We hit the trail at 5:30.

The trail today followed the hilltop ridges. However, most of the hilltops are now forested, so there are few good views out to the surrounding countryside. I did see a mountain with a reflection in a lake.



Several times we passed through forests where the tree trunks were covered in moss.



In the afternoon the temperature was in the mid-80's. The trail often was lined by flowers. Many different kinds of butterflies would chase each other. Some would seemingly lead the way down the trail.



We leapfrogged with "Double Happiness" and "Dirty Bowl" several times today. I first met Double Happiness just before Idyllwild.

We now are keeping track of reliable water sources. We carried extra water for dinner, since we knew we would be dry camping. Dry camping means you camp where there isn't a close source of water.

Now for my commentary on water purification. By far, most hikers use the Sawyer water filter. It is simple to use, but the drawback is that the filter will clog over time and become more difficult to use. In addition, the filter must be protected from freezing.

A few use the Steri-Pen, which uses ultraviolet light. It is very fast, purifying a liter of water in 90 seconds. The drawbacks are that the unit uses special batteries. In addition, in sunlight it can be hard to tell if the unit is working properly.

I use household bleach. I put two drops into a liter of water and let it mix for at least an hour. It is very quick to do. The drawback is that some can taste and smell the bleach. It is not a problem for me, and the method has worked well so far. In addition, there is a waiting time before the water can be consumed. I always have an extra liter that has been treated, so I can transfer it to my drinking container.

I have used the Sawyer mini-filter and became very frustrated with the time it took to do the filtering. I understand that the larger filter works better.

If I were to give advice, try the Sawyer filter. Also try adding bleach to water to see how it tastes. Do some online research. No method is absolutely perfect. And one more thing, in the desert, I was able to resupply from local water faucets at least 1/3 of the time. You are not always going to be getting water from a stream, pond or water trough!

I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1242.9. We hiked 26.7 miles today. The elevation here is 5,491 feet.



## Day 70 - Feather River Canyon

Wednesday, June 24, 2015

Wednesday June 24

In the evening, I often review my maps to see where I will be hiking the next day. To my surprise, the trail dropped from 5,100 feet to just over 3,000 feet. We were going to drop down to the Middle Fork of the Feather River.

Willy and I were on the trail by 5:30 and made excellent time due to a clear trail and several miles of downhill. We reached the river just before 9. The bridge was amazing. The bridge is the largest equestrian bridge on the PCT. It was carried into place by helicopter.



The trail over the river is at 3,076 feet, the lowest elevation on the trail since the Los Angeles Aqueduct. Of course, what that means is a long climb back up. The long climb was 3,000 feet!

On the way up, we crossed Bear Creek on another well made bridge. There were three other through hikers there, also getting ready for the long climb.



It took several hours and Willy and I stopped a couple of times to get water. The springs are well marked on the map, but they are further apart now. Many are off trail, which means extra hiking.

The hiking was harder this afternoon because the temperature was in the mid-80's. I was drenched in sweat. I was thankful for the buff that Patti gave me. I would soak it in the stream before putting it on. The cool water around my neck helped cool me down.

Whenever the trail crosses a road, I look to see if perhaps a trail angel is there. I'm

dreaming of juicy watermelon! On the way up to lookout rock, we saw a sign posted by a local trail angel inviting hikers to their cabin. Neither of us had cell service, so we couldn't call. However, when we reached the Big Creek Road, there was a trailer with treats. I had a root beer and an apple. It was wonderful!

After a break, we got extra water and dry camped. I took a sit-bath and feel so much better!

Now for a peek into what I do to set up camp. First, I always make sure I have water. I usually get it before stopping for the evening.

I next select a flat campsite. Hopefully it's one that has been used before. I also try to find one in the shade. There is nothing worse than trying to relax in a tent that feels like an oven inside. I set up my tent and weigh down the stakes with rocks. I don't want them to pull out if the wind comes up during the night.

I then unload my pack, putting my mattress, sleeping bag, extra clothes and ditty-bag in the tent.

I set up my stove, get out my dinner, boil the water and add it to the dehydrated food in my gallon plastic bag. I also make a cup of hot chocolate at the same time.

While the food is rehydrating, I blow up my air mattress and lay out my sleeping bag. I also hit the "OK" button on my SPOT device.

By this time my food is ready. I find a comfy place to sit and enjoy my meal. Since I never cook food in my stove pot, I put everything away. I keep all of my trash in a gallon Ziplock bag and store it in my food bag.

Everything then goes into the tent. I try to clean up and then get busy writing my blog. Hopefully I'm asleep by 8.

I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1269.7. We hiked 26.8 miles today. The elevation here is 5,580 feet.

## Comments

- JeniR

June 24, 2015

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Interesting commentary on water purification- thank you, that's helpful!

I agree with you, the Mariposa Lily's from an earlier entry are simply beautiful!

- valoriez

June 25, 2015

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I'm so happy that you have made the Spot and your blog a daily habit. It really helps my peace of mind to know you are safe every evening, and sometimes what you've been seeing and experiencing. Please keep doing those things, as well as eating, drinking and resting enough! I love you, Valorie

- valoriez

June 25, 2015

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Good to know that you are still purifying the water, and didn't carry out your threat to just drink whatever you found, untreated. <3

- valoriez

June 25, 2015

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The damn gnats sound brutal. At least they don't bite! I found one place in the garden where black flies are biting, which is horrible. Those bites itch for a week! Mark and Janice sold their house, so they will be gone by the time you get home. I'll miss them. Love you, Valorie

- [valoriez](#)

June 25, 2015

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It was quite odd to celebrate Father's Day without you, Bob. Know that we were thinking of you. I hope you found the photos of your present from me. Although I've used it a couple of times, the lawn is now golden, and I expect it to stay that way for at least the next couple of months. Oh, well. Love ya, Valorie

- [valoriez](#)

June 25, 2015

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Those Mariposa lilies are lovely! Good to hear that you are drinking extra water. Love ya, Valorie

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

June 25, 2015

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Keep it up, Dad! It sounds like you've been trucking along this past week. Are you feeling like you've still got your mojo?

- [BobZimmerman](#)

June 27, 2015

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I still have my MOJO and seem to have more energy. It helps to get more town food!

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

June 27, 2015

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Good to hear. Your blog posts sound like you're enjoying it more than you were a few weeks ago. Glad to hear that you've got your trail legs back!

- [BobZimmerman](#)

June 27, 2015

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I saw it! Is it easy to use?

- [valoriez](#)

June 28, 2015

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It's easy, and so quiet! I hope you love it as much as i do. However, Since I last wrote, the lawn has not grown one bit. So it's growing cobwebs in the garage, waiting for your return.  
Love, Valorie

## Day 71 - Belden

Saturday, June 27, 2015

Thursday June 25

"Descent into hell" describes our hike today. The trail dropped down into the town of Belden at 2,210 feet, a drop of 4,100 feet in elevation. The temperature in Belden was almost 100 degrees. It was HOT!

Our hike towards Belden was uneventful except we got our first view of Mt. Lassen in the distance.



We also saw several pretty lakes, this one was Silver Lake.



Both Willy and I had boxes sent to the local trail angels, the Braatens, who host Hiker Haven about a mile out of the town of Belden.

Our first order of business, however, was to get lunch. We stopped at the Belden Resort Restaurant and had an enormous hamburger. The neatest part was that trail angel "Legend" was there! He offered to drive us to Hiker Haven to get our boxes!

We arrived at Hiker Haven just after noon, but no one was there. However, a sign told us to come on in. We found our boxes and I called the Braatens and got permission to take the boxes. We decided to get a room in town, rather than stay with the Braatens. The room in town allowed us to do our shopping and be close to a restaurant and trailhead. We got a nice room at the Belden Resort, got all of our additional supplies, did our laundry, and got cleaned up.

We plan to leave early tomorrow morning with six days of food. The climb out of Belden is 4,100 feet, but it is over the span of 13 miles, so hopefully we can keep up a good pace

and get high enough to avoid the 100 degree heat forecast for tomorrow!  
Six days of food weights about 12 pounds. I carry 2.5 liters of water, which weighs about 5 pounds. My pack base-weight is about 16 pounds, so my pack will weigh about 33 pounds as I head uphill tomorrow! Wish me strength and stamina!



## Day 72 - 4,870 Feet Up

Saturday, June 27, 2015

Friday June 26

Last night, Willie said, "Bobaroo, would you be willing to go to the town of Chester in two days to resupply? It would save us from having to carry 6 days of food; we would only need to carry two, and then four from Chester."

I said I'd think about it and let him know in the morning. I decided that I would go to Chester, but I would keep my dinners. I would donate four days of snacks to the hiker box.

It is not uncommon to change a resupply plan, especially if two people want to continue to hike together. Besides, it is another opportunity to eat town food!

We left Belden at 5:30 AM. It was still in the 70's as Willie and I made our way back onto the trail. The literature we had read said that the trail was "graded", so we expected to make good time. Unfortunately, the trail was fairly steep in some places, overgrown with plants in others, and difficult to find in a few sections. We did manage to gain enough altitude before it began to warm significantly. We reached the top at 11:30, after six hours of steady climbing. We had climbed 4,870 feet!

At the top, we rested along with several other hikers.



From the top, the trail followed the ridge line and often dipped into the forest. We often walked through fields of blooming flowers.



At one spring, these flowers were blooming. I wish I knew what they are.



It was in the mid-80's again, so hiking was hot and sweaty. Water is still an issue and all of the hikers talk about their plan for resupply. We ended up carrying extra water so we can dry camp tonight.

Often I am asked, "Why don't you slow down and enjoy the view?" The answer is, we do enjoy the view, but much of our time is spent looking at the trail. There are so many things that can cause an accident: roots, rocks, holes, sticks, gravel on rocks, slippery rocks, mud, trees across the trail, and on and on. And sometimes we have to hunt for the trail! We may miss a view or two, but usually we have many opportunities to take in the beauty.

I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1315.1. We hiked 25.9 miles today. The elevation here is 6,599 feet.

## Comments

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

June 27, 2015

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Enjoy the town food...I can't believe that you're almost already 1/2 way to Canada! It is in the 90's here in Seattle with the forecast for even hotter temps next week. Stay cool!

- [BobZimmerman](#)

June 27, 2015

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It is almost 100 here in Chester, CA. At 6000 feet it is in the mid-80's. I feel like a sweat-hog hiking in those temperatures!

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

June 27, 2015

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Hopefully you've got some water sources in the next leg--I imagine you go through a lot of water hiking in the hot weather!

- [valoriez](#)

June 28, 2015

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Ah, OK. I was starting to worry that I would miss out on meeting up with you, because of my trip to Spain. I just want it all to work so you enjoy yourself, and we can meet up.

Love you,

Valorie

- [valoriez](#)

June 28, 2015

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Wow, half way. What an accomplishment, even if you quit today! As you've heard, it's hot here too, and is predicted to stay hot at least through next week. I think you are seeing Solomon Seal. I couldn't quite remember so I looked it up: Feathery Solomon Plume, or False Spikenard. Fun name for one of my favorite plants seen on hikes in the high country, including walks around Rainier. Love ya, Valorie

PS: drink LOTS of water, and get some salt into you too. And potassium so you don't cramp. <3

- [JamesPerkins](#)

June 30, 2015

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Hi Bob, loving your blog! I'm an occasional day hiker in the Cascades of Southern Washington down through Oregon. A friend of mine works at Boeing and pointed me to your blog.

I'm an amateur at plant identification, but I'm pretty sure that the sun-loving cheery yellow asters with large erect trowel like smooth edged triangular leaves could be Arrowleaf Balsamroot - they are common through mid elevations in Western North America from the Mojave Desert up into British Columbia.

- [AnneEZJones](#)

June 30, 2015

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Corn lilies?

<http://www.summitpost.org/corn-lilies/216095/c-198189>

Anne

## Day 73 - Halfway

Saturday, June 27, 2015

Saturday June 27

My goal today was to make it to the town of Chester in time to resupply for the next four days. The highway leading to Chester was just over twenty miles away.

Willie and I were on the trail by 5:15, one of the earliest starts since we have been hiking together. Any earlier and we would have needed headlamps!

There were good views of Mt. Lassen.



The highlight of the day was reaching the halfway point on the trail. Willie and I gave ourselves "high fives".



When we reached the highway, we called "Pipers Mom", a local trail angel, for a ride into Chester. I gave her some money to cover the cost of gas. We got an enormous room at the Best Western.



We had lunch at a local cafe, bought supplies at the grocery store, and had dinner at the Copper Kettle.

Our hiker friends, Caboose and Cut Finger, came over to celebrate being halfway.

I currently am at PCT mile 1335.4.

## Comments

- JeniR

June 28, 2015

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Congratulations on reaching the halfway point- I hope the celebration matched the accomplishment! :)

- valoriez

June 28, 2015

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Nice to hear that you got the Belden box. 100F though! That is literally killer temperatures. Strength and stamina to you, a thousand times over. Love, Valorie

- valoriez

June 30, 2015

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I can't believe that you are over the half-way mark already, Bobby. You have been hiking SO FAST! I really really really hope you are taking the time to take it all in. Time is rushing by so quickly. Love you, Valorie



## Day 74 - Lassen Volcanic National Park

Tuesday, June 30, 2015

Sunday June 28

Chester was a fun town to visit. The stores were close by and the food was good. I'm glad Willie had the idea to stop here.

I had two breakfasts. The Kopper Kettle had a wonderful Denver omelette and the Best Western had a good selection for their Continental breakfast. I called Pipers Mom, the local trail angel, and she took us to the trailhead. Cut-Finger and Caboose got a ride as well.

Since we didn't start hiking until 8:45, we weren't sure how many miles we could do. However, it was partly cloudy, so the temperature would be lower. Much of the morning we hiked through forests with few views.



By 11:30, we had hiked nine miles and made it to the North Fork of the Feather River.



We decided to hike to the Kings River, another twelve miles away. That would give us over twenty miles total today and the location has camping next to the river.

We soon entered Lassen Volcanic National Park. Mount Lassen is the largest plug dome volcano in the world as well as the southernmost member of the chain of Cascades volcanoes. The trail passed by Terminal Geyser and Boiling Springs Lake. There was a strong smell of sulfur, and the lake had mudpots, boiling springs, and fumaroles.



By 4:30 we made it to Kings Creek, having hiked 21.5 miles. That's not bad considering our late start.

Of note today was the lack of reliable water. I use Guthook's PCT guide which shows reliable sources for water. When we started today, it appeared that water would be found every four to five miles. In reality, it was every eight to ten miles and one "reliable" source (a lake) was more like a soggy mosquito-infested meadow. I always carry around two liters, so I didn't have a problem. But Willie was almost out of water a couple of times. Hopefully he will carry a bit more from now on.

I am camped at PCT mile 1356.9. The elevation here is 5,585 feet.

## Day 75 - Old Station & Subway Cave

Tuesday, June 30, 2015

Monday June 29

The birds start singing the minute it starts to get light. This morning it was at 4:45. Willie was ready a few minutes before I was, so I had to gobble up my pastry as I headed out of camp.

For the first several hours, the trail was really flat and soon passed into an area where the trees were all burned by the Reading Fire in 2012. The fire was caused by lightning.



By late morning, there we good views of Lassen.



We hurried down the trail at midday as the temperature pushed into the 90's. Our destination was Old Town, which has a grocery store, restaurant and post office. We arrived at 1:30, envisioning a juicy hamburger and cold drink. To our surprise, the "restaurant" was a deli in the grocery store. The deli was closed! The grocery store did have cold soda and a few snacks. We were told that we should go down the road to JJ's Cafe. It was only three miles away but closed in two hours. It might as well have been 30 miles away.

This is what Old Station looks like from the road.



Willie and I decided to hike another three miles to the Subway Cave. The cave is a lava tube that can be explored. The average temperature inside the cave is 46 degrees! We stopped at the picnic area and fixed dinner. We refilled our water bottles and got extra water for tomorrow's hike around the Hat Creek Rim, which has no water for 30 miles! In addition, there is little shade and daytime temperatures can reach into the upper 90's. Some consider this the hottest section of the trail. I am stealth camped tonight near the Subway Cave picnic area, at about PCT mile 1381.7. The elevation here is 4,215 feet.

## Comments

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

June 30, 2015

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Stealth camping....I love it! Did you get to check out the cave?

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

June 30, 2015

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The geyser and springs sound cool. I wish I was able to experience that with you!

- [JeniR](#)

June 30, 2015

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Lassen Volcanic NP sounds really interesting! The geyser & mudpots, do they make you feel close to home? :)

I wish you could count on the information in the guide regarding the location of water sources... that would make me nervous! I'm sure glad you had the foresight and ability to carry extra!

- [valoriez](#)

June 30, 2015

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Oooo, 46 degrees sounds great about now. At least for a few minutes! I remember reading about the Hat Creek Rim. Best of luck making it through the hellish heat! Both of you drink lots of water please! and make sure to get enough salt and stuff too. Love ya, Valorie

- [valoriez](#)

June 30, 2015

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You didn't say anything about swimming in the hot lake. Did you? It looks fun. It makes me so happy to hear that you are carrying enough water! But as Jeni says, yikes about the guidebook! I hope your fellow hikers are a good source of information, at least. <3

## Day 76 - Hat Creek Rim

Wednesday, July 01, 2015

Tuesday June 30

The trail along the Hat Creek Rim is considered one of the hottest sections of the trail. The temperature is 98 degrees today with a slight breeze. There is no water for 30 miles and very little shade. There might be a water cache midway, but we can't count on it.

To compound our problems, Willie came to me last night and said that his hip was really hurting him. If the pain persists in the morning, he was planning to take a day of rest. I needed to decide if I would go without him, or take a day off as well! I thought about it for some time, and decided that I would go on. I've been worried about his hip for some time and had come to the conclusion that I need to hike my own hike. Willie will either keep going or get off the trail to deal with his injury. I can't hike his hike.

We decided to start extra early to beat the daytime heat. My alarm went off at 3:15. Since I was cowboy camped, I packed quickly, put on my headlamp, and went to check on Willie. I was fearful at what I might find. Willie was packed up and ready to go. His hip felt much better! I was relieved.

On the way back to the trail, I missed a turn in the dark and ended up following the Subway Cave loop trail. We ended up right back where we started! I felt pretty silly, and the second time I checked my digital map and took the correct trail. We were headed north by 4 o'clock.

If you have ever walked in the dark with a flashlight trying to follow a trail you have never been on, you might imagine how difficult it was to keep my footing and stay on the trail. I had no depth perception and felt like I was learning to walk again. Fortunately it was light by 5 and we had no major mishaps in the dark.

Once we were on the rim trail there we views of Lassen and of Shasta. The trail will eventually make a long loop around Mount Shasta.



By 10:30, we reached the water cache. There were over 60 full one gallon jugs.





We had not used much water, so we didn't take any. We also decided to hike to the next reliable source of water, a little over 13 miles away.

The hike was "mostly" downhill, but the temperature was quickly climbing. By 1:30, we were so hot that we stopped under a large tree. Willie was leaned up against the tree, and after a while I heard him snoring! I checked the temperature and it was 98 degrees! Beside the trail, I occasionally saw some really beautiful flowers. Does anyone know what they are?



We finally headed down the trail and spent the next two hours in the sweltering heat. We reached water and filled up our water bottles. I drenched my head and soaked my buff. We passed the Hat Creek Power Plant and got more water. We decided to stealth camp near PCT mile 1412.1. The elevation here is 4,709 feet.

## Comments

- JamesPerkins

July 01, 2015

Hi Bob, thanks for sharing your fascinating reports; I'm an avid follower.

The beautiful pink flowers are almost certainly in *Calochortus*, the genus of Mariposa Lilies. This might be *C. macrocarpus* (sagebrush mariposa lily) which ranges through Oregon, Nevada, and N. California. The species I see most often is *C. subalpinus*

(subalpine mariposa lily), but it tends to be white and very hairy; this looks somewhat different.

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

July 01, 2015

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Sounds really hot--not too pleasant, I imagine. Stay cool and hydrated!

- [PatchesPal](#)

July 02, 2015

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I remember the Hat rim well. I slept at the edge of the parking lot at the hydro plant. I could here the hum of electricity all night.

- [valoriez](#)

July 02, 2015

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Dang that is hot. So amazed that you both made it, Bobby.

Love ya,

Valorie

## Day 77 - Burney Falls

Thursday, July 02, 2015

Wednesday July 1

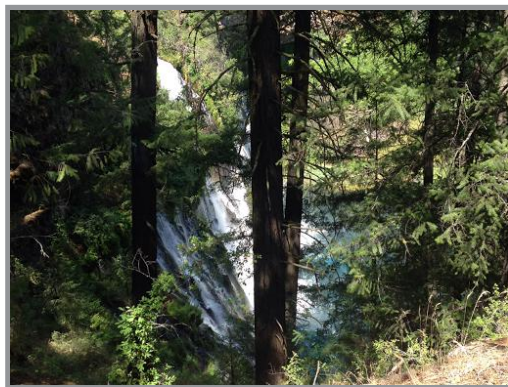
Willie left the trail today. It may be for just a few days or maybe longer. His hip has been hurting him every night now for several days. He probably will go and get an X-ray to see what the problem is.

We have hiked together since entering the high Sierras. I enjoyed our time together. It's hard to find someone who has similar habits and walks at the same pace. I liked sharing the sights and discoveries. I remember celebrating the crossing of Forester Pass and when we reached the half-way point. In town, it was fun sharing a room. We would take turns with laundry duty. And it was always nice to have a friend when eating out. I will miss him. When I said goodbye and walked away, I cried.

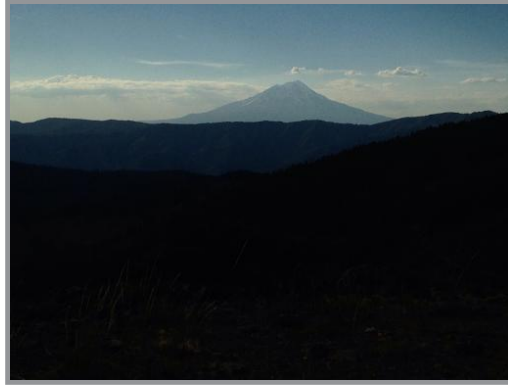
We did spend the morning hiking together. We stopped briefly at the Wild Bird Cache, had a soda and signed our names on their table top.



We arrived at Burney Falls State Park at 10. I got my resupply box and bought a few more snacks. Willie was trying to call a friend to come pick him up, but he had little phone service. He was going to try calling from the Visitors Center. The falls were spectacular, although it's hard to tell from this picture.



I headed back to the trail just before noon. There was a significant climb which kept my mind occupied. I hiked until 6 and have a campsite with a fabulous view of Shasta.



I miss having Willie here to share the view!

I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1439.9. I hiked 27.2 miles today. The elevation here is 5,345 feet.

## Comments

- [Carlos](#)

July 02, 2015

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Bummer about Willie !!

- [JeniR](#)

July 03, 2015

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We'll miss hearing about Willie too! It was so fun when his family met up with you guys in town. You're right to say that you can't hike his hike though.

I'll tell you what, keep entering on this blog and you'll never be alone- you have so many people 'with' you on this journey now, Bob!! We're all cheering for you!!

- [BobZimmerman](#)

July 04, 2015

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I believe that the two

## Day 78 - Roller Coaster Trail

Friday, July 03, 2015

Thursday July 2

I saw a black bear today! I rounded a corner on the trail, and the bear was walking up the trail. It was startled to see me. Fortunately it was headed to Canada, because it took off running and left me in a cloud of dust. I had forgotten how big a full-grown bear looks up close! Good thing it was a wild one and ran away.

I got on the trail at 5:20. It was just getting light. The trail seemed like a roller coaster. It would go up and then down. It wound around and around the hills. And then it would go up and down again.

At times the trail plowed through grass and ferns. Yes, there is a trail going through the brush.



I noticed these flowers growing alongside the trail. Does anyone know what they are?



There were several good views of Mount Shasta.





It was hot again today; probably in the 90's. I paid close attention to the water sources. By 4 I was looking for a place to camp. But wouldn't you know it, the trail was following a steep hillside. I finally found a spot at 5:30. I texted Willie to find out what was happening. He is staying with a friend. He didn't say anything about his hip. I hope he isn't just resting. He needs to see a doctor! Of course there is always a tame deer here and there!



I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1471.0. I hiked 31.1 miles today. The elevation here is 3,466 feet.

## Day 79 - Blisters Again

Friday, July 03, 2015

Friday July 3

I have two blisters!

I'm not complaining, it's just surprising to me that after all the miles I've walked I would get blisters now. I have one near my heel on my right foot, and one near my big toe on my left foot. I'm sure it's because I have increased the number of miles recently, as well as the hours spent hiking each day. I have them popped and taped. And, I have a zero day coming up the day after tomorrow, so my feet should get some rest.

I'm also delighted because it is my son's birthday! I scurried up a big climb so that I would have telephone service. I got to talk to him about the trail and of course wished him a "Happy Birthday". He mentioned that his friend has a small airplane, and they might fly in somewhere and do "trail magic". That would be incredible!

I got on the trail at 5:15 this morning. The hiking was easy, and I thought it was a short distance to the McCloud River, a major river with good campsites. Another hiker asked me last night if I was going to camp at the river. It's a good thing I found a good spot earlier, because it was over 5 more miles to the river!



The trail was very well maintained and the grade was perfect for keeping a good pace. In a couple of damp areas I came across "umbrella" plants!



The other good thing today was the weather. It was cloudy most of the day which kept the temperature in the 70's. It made the hiking much more pleasant. At the top of the

mountain I got my first look at Castle Crags.



When I had phone service, I also called the Dunsmuir Lodge to reserve a room. It's a good thing I did, because the first two places I called were totally booked. I got the last room at the lodge! I also called the local taxi service to confirm that they were working on the Fourth of July. They are and can provide transportation from interstate 5 to Dunsmuir for \$25.

I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1501.8. I hiked 30.8 miles today. The elevation here is 3,875 feet.

## Comments

- JeniR

July 03, 2015

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Yes, Happy Birthday to Paul! We can never forget Paul's birthday; Cody & I met at your house at Paul's birthday party in 1986! :) You & Val raised some good kiddos, by the way!

Sounds like a day of rest would do you & your feet some good! Thank goodness you called ahead and can look forward to the room in Dunsmuir!

- valoriez

July 04, 2015

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Sorry to hear you have blisters, but glad to know that you haven't been pestered by them for awhile. Heal, darling! Love ya, Valorie

## Day 80 - Dunsmuir

Saturday, July 04, 2015

Saturday July 4

I love town days! I especially love it when it is the Fourth of July.

I tried to sleep in this morning, but the sky was so pretty and Mount Shasta was getting ready to greet the morning sun. I have been "cowboy camping" the last three nights, so I was able to pack quickly.

I had just over 4 miles to go before I arrived at the freeway. My right foot was still sore from the blister, so I took my time.

I arrived and called the Shasta Taxi. They picked me up within 15 minutes and I was in town shortly after 8.



Since my check-in time at the Dunsmuir Lodge wasn't until noon, I went to breakfast at the Cornerstone Bakery & Cafe! Their omelette and red potatoes were wonderful.

After breakfast, I checked out the laundromat, to make sure they were still in business, and the post office, to verify their hours of operation, and then walked down to the Dunsmuir Lodge. This is what the motel looks like from the street.



I was told to check back at 1, so I sat out on their lawn and gathered my dirty laundry. I quickly stripped down out of my dirty hiking gear. I hope no one was watching! I had just gathered everything together when the motel manager, Eric, came out and said that he had a room ready! Good thing he didn't come a few minutes earlier or he might have sent me packing!

I decided the first order of business was to finish getting my laundry done. For those who are not hikers, that means wearing my rain gear so that I can wash all of my hiking clothes and underwear. My rain gear was hot since it was in the mid-90's today!

It took almost two hours to wash and dry my clothes. While they were washing, I had lunch at the Burger Barn. The cheese burger and fries were delicious!

While most of my clothes were in the dryer, I pulled out my underwear and hiking clothes and changed while in the laundromat. My hiking clothes dry really quickly in the warm air, so I don't need to run them through the dryer. I really hope there was no camera in the laundromat as naked guy got into more comfortable clothes! Fortunately no one else was around and no one came to arrest me.

I got back to my room and took a much needed shower. I also stopped at the convenience store for some beer and some snacks for the trail. Gosh, a cool beer (or three) sure hit the spot!

I attended the "Jazz in the Canyon" concert by Allison Scull and Victor Martin to celebrate the Fourth of July (<http://allisonandvictor.com/files/Public/jic2015.pdf>). It started late for me (6 PM), but I can sleep in tomorrow! Victor Martin was absolutely fabulous on the saxophone! I understand that Allison Scull is well known in the jazz community, but I didn't think she was singing her best. (<http://allisonandvictor.com/Public/AboutUs>)



I also stopped by the Dunsmuir Brewery Works to listen to Sonido Alegre. Their music was interesting, but not as well done as Allison & Victor. Besides, I sat in the dining area for over half an hour and was never served. Perhaps my hiker garb meant that I wasn't interested in a beer?

I headed to the local pizza house and had a small all-meat pizza. I shared a piece with an older lady who appeared to be homeless. I think she appreciated it.

I am staying tonight at the Dunsmuir Lodge. I don't have to wear my sun hat and mosquito net tonight! Yippee!

## Comments

- [valoriez](#)

July 04, 2015

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Happy Independence Day, Bobby! So happy you are taking a zero day tomorrow in this terrific heat. I love you. <3

- [valoriez](#)

July 04, 2015

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Dang, no photo of the bear! I love the cairns though. I looked through the little flower books but all I can say is that your flower looks like a lily. It's not a glacier lily though. Love ya, Valorie



## Day 81 - Dunsmuir Day of Rest

Sunday, July 05, 2015

Sunday July 5

Today was "fix-it" day. There have been several little sewing projects that I have been putting off for a day like today.

My Dirty Girl gaiters are wonderful, and I highly suggest that anyone doing a long hike should get a pair. I wear them every day to keep rocks and sand out of my shoes. They attach to the back of my shoe using Velcro. A small strip of Velcro hook is glued to the back of my shoe, and the gaiter comes with a piece of Velcro loop sewn onto the back. Over time, the Velcro loop threads break, and if not repaired, will result in the Velcro loop pulling free from the gaiter. Here's what it looked like before the repair.



I used dental floss as my thread. It is tough and resists breaking. I sewed it back together and now it works like new.



My second sewing project was to repair a small tear in the bug netting of my tent. I accidentally tore the netting on the floor while setting it up. I think that's how some of the ants were getting into the tent. Again, dental floss was my thread and it repaired the damage.

My third sewing project was to repair the stuff bag for my Thermo-rest air mattress. The threads holding the bag together had started to come apart. A few stitches with dental floss fixed it.

My next project was simply to wash my Thermo-rest air mattress. Everything that is used on the trail gets filthy. I could see dirt smudges all over my mattress. So, just like me, the

mattress got a bath! It's amazing how much nicer it looks when clean!  
I also gave my sun hat a washing in the sink. It too was filthy!  
The other excitement this morning was a house fire. I don't know if it was caused by fireworks, but it was the talk of the town when I went to breakfast this morning.



It's hard for me to just relax. I keep worrying about tomorrow. Will both my boxes be at the post office? Will I find enough snacks for the next five days? Will I be able to get in enough miles with a big climb, heavy pack and a late start? Will my feet feel OK? I should just trust that tomorrow's problems will take care of themselves. I find my emotions are quick to emerge. For some reason I feel lonely today. Perhaps it's because I am so accustomed to having company while in town! I have a big day tomorrow! Wish me luck!

## Comments

- JeniR

July 05, 2015

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Good luck, Bob- you will look back someday and be amazed at how strong you are at this moment in time; you've trained for this and can trust the process now. You have an awesome family, so many friends and lots and lots of supporters- they're just a little farther away, that's all!

- PaulZimmerman

July 06, 2015

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Good luck today!

- valoriez

July 06, 2015

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So happy that you got both those boxes. Sweated blood about that! Lovely to hear that the dental floss worked for you. Aren't you glad you took some? Hopefully you are flossing with it too! Love ya, Valorie

## Day 82 - Castle Crags - Where am I?

Tuesday, July 07, 2015

Monday July 6

Yesterday I ended my blog with a list of things I was worried about. Lets see what transpired.

Will both my boxes be at the post office? Yes, both were there. I got there just as they opened. Everyone was interested in my hike and had a lot of questions.

Will I find enough snacks for the next five days? Yes. I only had to buy three Snickers bars.

Will I be able to get in enough miles with a big climb and a late start? Yes I did, but I had to hike until 7:30. I hiked 22.3 miles.

Will my feet feel OK? Not really. The blisters are still tender. The one on my right foot is in a place where occasionally a rock will push against it. Hiking for 9.5 hours left me with tired feet!

I was feeling really anxious to get going this morning. When I went to put on one of my gaiters, I noticed the metal clip was missing. The clip slips under the shoelace to hold the gaiter in place. I suspected that it came off when I was doing laundry. So, on my way to breakfast, I stopped by the laundromat. I found it! Now I have a new sewing project.

After picking up my resupply boxes, I walked back to the motel and sorted out my meals and snacks. I have five days of food to get me to Etna, my next resupply town. I also put together a hiker box. When checking out, I asked Eric, the manager, if it was possible to get a ride back to the trail. He said "Sure!" I paid him \$5 for gas and arrived at the trail at 10.

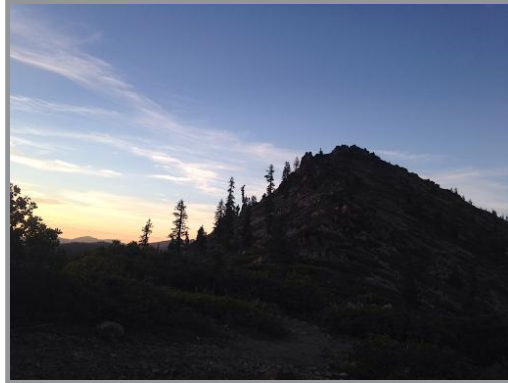
After heading up the wrong trail at the start, I got back to the correct trail and was on my way. Water is a potential problem on this section so I checked for reliable sources. Just after Indian Springs the next reliable source is 24 miles! When I reached Indian Springs, there was a sign saying "Don't Drink the Water". There had been a fire here and they used a fire suppression agent that had gotten into the water. Fortunately there was another stream just up the trail!

A short time later, I got to a four-way trail junction, but didn't see a sign for the PCT. However, the trail heading up the mountain looked heavily used, and since I knew there was a big climb, up I went. There were a lot of people on the trail, and having "trail" legs, I was passing them fairly quickly. There were some great views of the Castle Crags.



After going up rather steeply for a mile, the trail came to a junction. Neither of the trails were the PCT. I pulled out my phone and checked my GPS location on the map. I was nowhere near the trail! I had made a bad decision a mile back! I felt so foolish! So, down I

went. The PCT was poorly marked, and I had wasted an hour on the wrong trail. I planned to hike until 6:30 which would have given me nearly 20 miles for the day. I now needed to hike for another hour! I finally found a campsite at 7:30. I am camped at PCT mile 1528.8. The elevation here is 6,868 feet. This is my view.



## Comments

- [valoriez](#)

July 07, 2015

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More beautiful photos! Wonderful. Sorry to hear that you are still being troubled by blisters. I just sent your box to Crater Lake -- over 100 miles late. Sorry about that. On the other hand, i was able to get your Leukotape P into the box, so there's that.

Finally a bit cooler here today; mid-80s. Back to the 90s tomorrow though. :-)

I love you. <3

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

July 07, 2015

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Looks like a beautiful view. Hopefully the trail today is/was better marked!

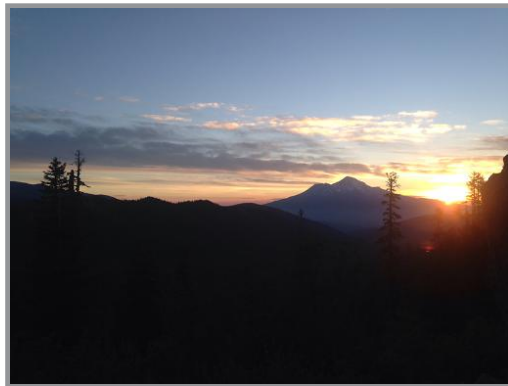
## Day 83 - Logs and Thunderstorms

Wednesday, July 08, 2015

Tuesday July 7

I didn't sleep well last night. It was late when I finally went to sleep. Unfortunately the campsite was a bit too sloped, so I kept sliding to the bottom of the ground cloth. It was also a bit breezy, so I kept wrapping my sleeping bag different ways to stay warm. My biological clock, however, was still working well, and I woke up at 4:45.

I was on the trail before 5:30. The trail had few climbs, so the hiking was easy. However, I felt like someone had attached an anchor to me, as I found it hard to make a good pace. I blame the lack of sleep. This was the sunrise behind Mount Shasta.



I did come across an odd plant named Whitney's locoweed. The red-stripped balloon-shaped seed pod is poisonous. If eaten by grazing animals, it causes them to behave oddly.



One of the frustrations faced by hikers are the trees that fall across the trail. Getting around these obstacles can sometimes be difficult. For example, in the picture below, the easiest way was to take off my pack, crawl under, then pull my pack under.





In many cases, the tree is small enough to step over. If it is too big, often there is a trail around. Today, however, I managed to land on my back (a turtle), trying to step over a tree. This tree was high enough off the ground that my leg wouldn't touch the ground on the other side. Normally this is not a problem. I just bring the other leg up and rotate my body until my leg touches the ground. Today, though, as I brought my other leg up, it got caught on a broken limb. I leaned back to free my leg, but forgot how heavy my pack was. The weight of my pack pulled me back and down I went! I managed to scrape up my leg in the process. I know I uttered some words that I shouldn't have, and it took me a while to untangle myself from the bushes. This would have made an excellent "America's Funniest" video!

The other excitement today was the thunderstorms. The clouds had been building all afternoon. Around 3 the thunder and lightening began. I decided it was time to make camp. I got everything set up and ate my dinner early. There was hail and a torrential downpour. Hopefully by sleeping in my tent tonight I will sleep better. I'm sure glad that I stopped early!

I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1553.7. I hiked 24.9 miles today. The elevation here is 6,932 feet.

## Comments

- [RonZimmerman](#)

July 08, 2015

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It seems that you are pretty consistently racking up the miles. Are you ahead of where you thought you'd be when you planned out the adventure?

- [valoriez](#)

July 09, 2015

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@RonZimmerman - Bob is 3 weeks ahead! That speed has kept me hopping to get the boxes sent on time. Bobby, I'm loving your plant photos lately! Locoweed is awesome! Are you sure you didn't eat some before your "turtle" incident? <3

## Day 84 - Washington Rain?

Thursday, July 09, 2015

Wednesday July 8

Tap, tap, ta-tap tap. I knew what that sound meant. It was rain hitting my tent and it was time to get up. I was tempted to stay in my warm sleeping bag for another hour to see if the rain would stop. But, rain is also a part of this adventure, so I needed to deal with it. I packed up as much as I could while still in the tent. Then I packed my sleeping bag, electronics and clothes in a plastic bag and put them in my pack. That way, if my pack gets wet, they should still stay dry.

I was on the trail by 5:40, and the rain changed from light rain to a steady rain. At times the wind would blow it sideways! I had my raincoat on, but sweat still got me wet. I didn't wear my rain pants, since my hiking pants have the pockets I need and they dry really quickly once the rain stops. Besides, my rain pants are not breathable, so I would get wet anyway.

My hiking hat soon was saturated, and I could tell the intensity of the rain by the rate of the dripping from the front of the hat! Rain started to trickle down my neck, but my buff soaked most of it up. It felt like I was hiking in Washington State because there were puddles in the trail!



There really must be better rain gear. Perhaps a poncho?

Fortunately, by 10 the rain stopped and the sun came out. I crossed highway 3 and headed into the Trinity Alps Wilderness.

The trail climbed back above 7,000 feet with good views.



At one stream, I noticed these odd plants. They are California Pitcher plants. Insects crawl in a small slit near the top of the hood. Unable to escape, they are slowly digested by the plant.



By 4 PM, my feet were tired and thunderstorms were building again. I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1583.1. The elevation here is 6,828 feet. I hiked 29.4 miles.

## Comments

- [valoriez](#)

July 09, 2015

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Jealous of the rain! It's been so long since we had any. We might get showers this weekend; my fingers are crossed for luck. The plants in your photos look happy for the rain. I hope it helps ensure that the lightning doesn't start a fire! I'm afraid of what you might find in Oregon and here in Washington. It got so smoky yesterday that I've not seen Rainier for two days. :( On the upside, the smokey haze is actually making it a bit cooler. 86 here, rather than the predicted 92. I'll take it! Even with the 50% humidity.

Love ya,

Valorie

PS: please check your email.

- [JeniR](#)

July 09, 2015

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Great plant pictures and views lately!

You're really moving; hiking almost 30 miles in one day means not many rest breaks. I hope your feet are okay tomorrow.

You haven't mentioned running into through hikers lately, are you not seeing any?

## Day 85 - Russian Wilderness

Thursday, July 09, 2015

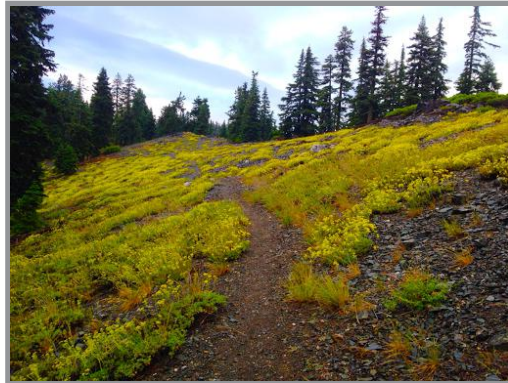
Thursday July 9

I wanted to get to Etna today, my next resupply town. It was almost 24 miles to the road where I could hitch a ride. Was I up to it?

I packed up my tent just before it started to rain. I was on the trail at 5:15. I should have been using my headlamp, but I could just make out the trail as it was getting light. I had my raincoat on and the rain came and went all morning. Like yesterday, I got wet as the rain soaked my pants and hat. To make matters worse, the plants along the trail held an enormous supply of water in their leaves. As I brushed by them I got a good soaking!

The trail was like a yo-yo all day. Up to a saddle and then down to a creek. Then up again and down again. It was like the trail designers were testing our ability to switch from up to down. I must confess that I was getting worn down by all the changes in elevation!

By noon the rain began to let up. However, there were low clouds all afternoon, blocking my view of the mountains. As I climbed higher, I often noticed the pretty wildflowers.



I entered the Russian Wilderness just after noon. The first thing I noticed were the burnt trees. Last year there was a wildfire that burnt thousands of acres. It is so disturbing to see all the damage created in such a short period of time.

I noticed that the trail was criss-crossed with what appeared to be water runoff. I suspected that it was from the fire fighting efforts. However, I later learned that it was likely from severe thunderstorms, dropping several inches of rain in a matter of several hours!





I also noticed a special plant, a sedum that is common to this area. It is called the Sierra Stone Crop, and is able to survive on the rocky soil.



I reached Etna Summit at 1:30. The road is called the Sawyers Bar Road. There is little traffic on the road, but I finally hitched a ride from a guy named Scott. He told me a lot about the fire fighting efforts in the Russian Wilderness. He dropped me off at the Etna Motel, where I rented a room for the night.



Tomorrow I will probably camp out at the hiker hut. All of the motels in town are booked for the weekend. I need to take a day of rest and enjoy the town atmosphere! I had a great dinner at the Etna Brewery & Pub! I have made it to PCT mile 1606.4. I am currently warm and cozy at the Etna Motel.

## Comments

- [JeniR](#)

July 09, 2015

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Look at you go! Reaching mile 1,606 means you have 1,000 miles remaining!

- [valoriez](#)

July 09, 2015

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Another great plant photo! How your mom would have loved seeing those sedums growing on the rocky soil. Lovely to hear that you are safely in Etna. I hope that the weather improves during your zero day. Love ya, Valorie



## Day 86 - Etna

Friday, July 10, 2015

Friday July 10

Rest is wonderful! I woke up laying in a king-sized bed at the Etna Motel thinking about what I needed to do today.

First, I wanted to fix my Dirty Girl gaiter which had the front clip come off. I struggled with threading the needle with the dental floss; my eyesight isn't what it used to be. The sewing went well and it's fixed.

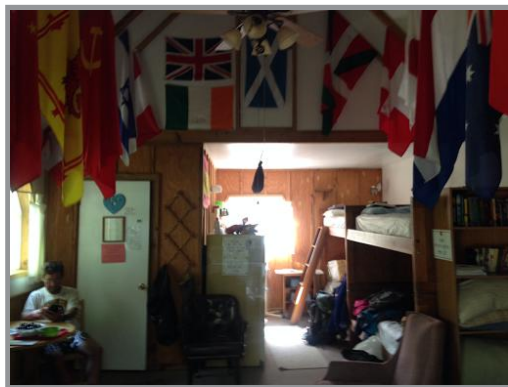
Second, I got to take a shower! What a luxury! I still found an ant crawling on me. It likely was hiding in my pack; I hope it wasn't hiding between my toes!

Third, I went to breakfast at Bob's Ranch House. Several other hikers were there including Windscreen and River. They told me that there's room at the Hiker Hut, but I should hurry and check in before others arrived. I had a fantastic breakfast and then headed to the Hiker Hut where I got a bunk for \$25.



I spent several hours with River showing her how to set up a blog and manage it with BlogTouch Pro. She was very appreciative.

During the day at least half a dozen other hikers arrived. The bunks are filled and many are camped outside on the lawn.



Lucky, a hiker I met in Big Bear, arrived. Caboose and Cut-finger stopped by, but are heading back to the trail tonight. I found out that Willie was here on July 8, so he will be about 3 days ahead. I'm not sure how to feel about that since he never let me know that he was getting back onto the trail.

Several of us had dinner at the Etna Brewery & Pub. The Imperial IPA was delicious. I plan on getting back on the trail at 6 tomorrow morning. It is 56 miles to Seiad Valley, my next resupply. It is 92 miles to the Oregon border!

## Comments

- [valoriez](#)

July 11, 2015

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Hmmm, I'm starting to sound like a broken record -- I'm late again sending your Crescent, OR box! First thing tomorrow morning. I'm glad you were pessimistic on shipping times! Love ya, Valorie

## Day 87 - Marble Mountain Wilderness

Sunday, July 12, 2015

Saturday July 11

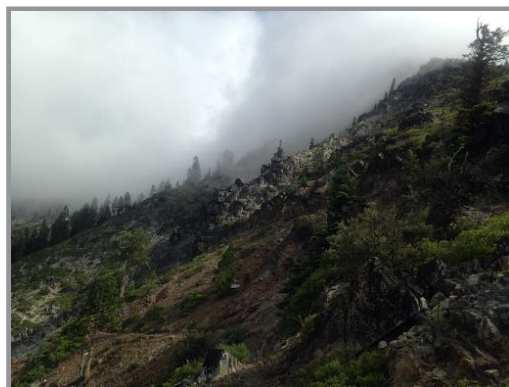
I have mixed emotions about sleeping in the Hiker Hut in Etna. It was nice to have a soft bed, bathroom and a roof over my head. And the hiker talk was often interesting. However, I usually go to bed early when I am going back on the trail. My bunk was opposite the sink. So every time someone washed their hands, got water, shaved or brushed their teeth, it was noisy. In addition, the TV was on and there was a lot of talking. It didn't get quiet until almost 10.

I also made the mistake of drinking two beers and a root beer float with dinner. I ended up going to the bathroom three times during the night. The result was a night with a lot of interrupted sleep!

River and I got a ride back to the trail at 6. It was cloudy and foggy. It was also cold enough that I put on my raincoat. Within a mile I entered the Marble Mountain Wilderness.



With all the clouds, I was unable to see what was around me. There obviously were some pretty views.



By afternoon, the skies started to clear. I got a good view of Marble Mountain.



I decided to stop early, as my feet were complaining. One of the first things I do, after the tent is set up, is to fix dinner. Tonight I had loaded mashed potatoes with salami, bacon bits, Fritos and olive oil. My beverage was hot chocolate with marshmallows!



I'm camped at Marble Valley, PCT mile 1630.1. The elevation here is 5,715 feet. I hiked 23.8 miles today.

## Comments

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

July 12, 2015

Looks like beautiful country! Good to see a picture with you in it! :)

- [JeniR](#)

July 12, 2015

I agree with Paul- great to 'see' you again, Bob! You've taken a lot of great photo's but, the best one's are with you in them!

- [valoriez](#)

July 12, 2015

Great self-portrait, Bob! You aren't wearing your glasses though? You gotta keep an eye out for the bear that wants your food, instead of racing you to Canada! Time to send your box to Sisters tomorrow.....



## Day 88 - Seiad Valley

Monday, July 13, 2015

Sunday July 12

I camped last night at Marble Valley. There is an old boarded up ranger station here and a nice creek, where I got water for the day. I got on the trail at 5:30 and walked through the talus slope under Marble Mountain. Some rocks were the size of a house! I understand that the rocks in these mountains contain calcium carbonate. Many of the rocks are weathered, since the rocks slowly dissolve in acidic water. There are many caves here. The largest of the caves is Bigfoot Cave, which is 12 miles long and over 1000' deep. I didn't have time to explore, but there was a small cave beside the trail.



I decided that I would hike as far as possible today, because Seiad Valley has a small grocery store and a cafe. In addition, it would be nice to hike out of Seiad Valley when it is cooler since the area is known for its very hot weather. The only problem is that Seiad Valley is over 30 miles away!

The trail followed the ridges and then began a drop to Seiad Valley, a descent of over 4,000 feet. The trail passed through some areas with wild rhododendrons and some areas with fire weed.



The last 6 1/2 miles into Seiad Valley involve a road walk. I decided that if I could get to the road before 3, that I would keep walking. I arrived at the road at 2:30. Halfway through the road walk I spotted the bridge over the Klamath River.



I arrived at the Mid River RV Park at 4:30. The area for PCT hikers was packed, but I found a good spot for my tent. I got a shower and picked up my resupply at the grocery store.

Cut-finger and Caboose stopped in for supplies. They are heading back to the trail tonight because they have to get to Ashland by midday Wednesday.



Since there were so many hikers, the cafe agreed to open just for us. The hamburger and chocolate shake hit the spot! Some of the hikers here who I have met before include Thermometer (the fellow from Korea), Hog (who I met in Etna), Flying Fish and Windscreen.

I am camped at PCT mile 1662.1. The elevation here is 1,445 feet. I hiked 32 miles today.

## Comments

- [valoriez](#)

July 13, 2015

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Wow you are hiking quickly. I just checked and your box to Crater Lake is waiting for you. I UPS'd to Crescent on Saturday morning, and to Sisters today. Running out of boxes to send! Love ya, Valorie

## Day 89 - Up 4,472 Feet

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Monday July 13

As I lay in my tent on the lawn of the Mid Mountain RV Park in Seiad Valley, I felt uneasy about the upcoming hike. The trail climbs steadily to the top of the ridge, over 4,400 feet, in less than eight miles. I climbed a similar distance when leaving Belden. However, that climb was done over the span of 13 miles. This was a more aggressive climb.

I left at 5:30. The trail follows the highway for a mile before heading up. There was fog hovering over the valley, which was good, because this climb is very exposed and can be extremely hot in the midday sun.



I liked the fact that the trail headed up all the way, and the early morning fog kept it cool. I passed Cut-Finger and Caboose about halfway up. I reached the top by 9. It's always exciting to reach the top and know a major climb is complete!



The trail followed the ridge-line of the mountains. I forgot to check for reliable sources for water, but was carrying over two liters. Fortunately, a small spring was still flowing, so I got an extra two liters so I could dry camp tonight.



Several places along the trail had beautiful flowers. They look like daisies to me.



By early afternoon my feet and legs were tired, so I camped. I had stuffing with sausage, Fritos and olive oil for dinner. With all that, it still tasted bland. Anyone have ideas to perk it up with something that is lightweight and readily available?

Now for some comments about gear. I wish I could have found some lightweight camp shoes. I didn't bring any. After hiking all day, it would feel so good to get out of my hiking shoes and into camp shoes. In addition, being able to quickly slip on shoes at night would help with bathroom breaks. Lots of hikers bring clogs or sandals. Willie had a trimmed-down pair of slippers that were lightweight and quick to put on.

I am camped at PCT mile 1685.9. I hiked 23.8 miles today. The elevation here is 6,247 feet.

## Comments

- [PatchesPal](#)

July 14, 2015

Bob, Its funny how some parts of the trail are blur to me and other parts a crystal clear. The part from Seid Valley to Callahan's is very remember able. that was the section I did in two days and did 40 miles the day into Callahan's. also you will be going over the CA/Or boarder. I remember what a relief to finally be out of California. It seemed like it went on for ever.

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

July 14, 2015

Beautiful picture of the valley shrouded in clouds! Less than a 1,000 miles to go...

- [BobZimmerman](#)

July 15, 2015

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I'll bet you did the 40 miles thinking of the "all you can eat" breakfast buffet!

- [valoriez](#)

July 15, 2015

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Love the fog photo! And you standing in triumph at the pass. <3



## Day 90 - Oregon!

Wednesday, July 15, 2015

Tuesday July 14

I stood there, filled with emotion - joy, gratitude, relief. I was overwhelmed as tears came. I looked up. The sign said, "Oregon / California".



I knew I would reach Oregon when I got on the trail this morning. It was 14 miles, a long way to hike. It was foggy in some places and chilly in the wind. I must have walked right passed a bear, because another hiker a few minutes behind me got a great video of the bear on the trail.

I know I was getting close when I passed an old building just above Donohue Meadows.



In the middle of a steady climb, I saw the sign and trail register.



As I continued into Oregon, I kid you not, clouds and fog closed in. For a while the fog was really thick. I've heard that the trail in Oregon is easier, and most hikers see their first 30-mile days here. Of course I've already seen 30-mile days several times already! I plan to resupply in Ashland. I needed to do enough miles today so I can reach Interstate 5 where I hope to hitch a ride into town. I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1718. I hiked 34 miles today. The elevation here is 6,459 feet.

## Comments

- Erica

July 15, 2015

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Welcome to Oregon!!!

- BobZimmerman

July 15, 2015

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Thank you. I still can't believe I'm here!

- valoriez

July 15, 2015

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Wow. I can't believe you've reached Oregon so quickly. I think you really are trying to set a record for the 65+ class!

I love you,

Valorie

- JeniR

July 15, 2015

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Holy smokes, Oregon at last! What a fantastic achievement! We hope you're celebrating this milestone tonight in only the way a thru-hiker can- with Fritos and olive oil! ;) Just kidding! If it helps, we paused on this milestone in honor of you!

- JeniR

July 15, 2015

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Cody & I were JUST talking about how hard it must be to take a picture of yourself on the trail b/c no one is around. You're doing quite well though; when you share pictures with you in them, it doesn't look like you need more practice, they're looking great! We

have to impress upon you how valuable those pictures will be later... to you, to your kids and to your grandkids; they will mean more than any landscape image could ever mean... trust us & keep shooting!

- JeniR

July 15, 2015

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:) Thank you for your (funny) response. Interesting how just a short distance apart and a similar pace could keep people completely isolated.

## Day 91 - Ashland

Thursday, July 16, 2015

Wednesday July 15

A town day is so energizing and at the same time worrisome. I love getting clean and enjoying town food. On the other hand, there is the uncertainty about getting to town and finding a place to stay. Perhaps that is why I couldn't sleep very well last night.

I ended up last night stealth camping in the woods because I couldn't find an established campsite along the trail. It was windy until dark and then calm but cool. I had to wear my wool cap and my down jacket. I also had to set up my tent because it was wet from dew from this morning. During the night I heard snapping branches and chewing sounds near my tent. Perhaps because it was so quiet that I heard all of these noises.

I was on the trail at 5:15. It was easy hiking and I got to see a ruby-red sunrise. I didn't know it, but I have been traveling in the Rogue River National Forest. The Rogue River flows by the town of Gold Beach, the city where I was born. I also got a nice view of Mount Shasta.



I caught up with Windscreen and we hiked together for the morning. We reached the highway at 8 AM, and walked to Callihan's resort. Waiting there was Caboose and Cut-Finger. They were trying to hitchhike into Ashland, but there was very little traffic. Cut-Finger called the taxi shuttle and we all got a ride to town for \$18. By the way, I heard that Willie was staying at Callihan's. Hmmm.

In town, we all decided to have breakfast at the Morning Glory restaurant. The breakfast was fantastic. I had a sausage omelette with spinach and cheese.



I checked in at the Ashland Motel which was next door to the restaurant. I did my laundry and showered. I called my son Paul, who plans to fly down with his friend Nick to Crater Lake to meet me on Monday afternoon. That should be exciting! I really look forward to it! I just have to average 25 miles a day to get there on time!

This afternoon I walked to the local sports supplier and bought food, sun gloves, and sunglasses. My sunglasses broke last night, and my sun gloves were starting to fall apart.

I also got snacks at the local grocery store. Dinner was at the Mexican restaurant just up the street. The burrito and beers hit the spot.

Tomorrow will truly be a day of rest. My feet will appreciate it!

I have been looking for a barber shop, but I can't find one, unless I want to go to a hair salon. I guess I'll just have to use a razor and my scissors to try to trim (hack at) my unruly beard!

I am currently at PCT mile 1726.5.

## Comments

- AnneEZJones

July 19, 2015

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As is your youngest child! Jealous that Paul gets to go see you! I wanna go! I wanna go! (Imagine me stomping my feet and pouting as I say the words very jealously) I have to settle for delivering a care pack to Paul (who then can deliver it to the man of the year) from all the followers in a little town called Woodinville..

dad, I am very jealous of Paul and him getting to fly down and deliver some trail magic. However Monday's are always my sleep day due to the medicines I have to take on the last day of work to kick my health in the butt and try to reverse its thinking. But as I gathered the "magic" that will be delivered to you on the trail, I kept hearing how cool it is that you've already gotten so far and that you are doing it... At all!!!! They ask about your progress and are always interested in how you are doing and all the ups and downs of your journey. Like them, I am so very proud of you and have become an even bigger inspiration to me. Not that you hadn't inspired me before by so many of your traits but just such a HUGE journey alone! It takes a lot of strength in many different areas! I hope the trail magic is kind to you and if there are any personal requests just let me know and I'll do my best! I love you Dad! Hope to see you when you get closer to the trails in this neck of the woods



## Day 92 - Ashland Day of Rest

Friday, July 17, 2015

Thursday July 16

I was sound asleep last night at 10 PM when the phone rang. Who would be calling? It was Willie! He had left Callihan's at 10 AM yesterday morning, hiked all day and was in his tent. He is doing well. His doctor said it was OK to keep hiking and the numbness in his leg was common in people carrying backpacks all day. It was good to hear his voice; I just wish the call would have come a week ago. It looks like I will be two days behind him for a while.

I had breakfast again at the Morning Glory restaurant. Their French toast with fresh blackberries and lemon butter was superb!

I contacted the taxi service and arranged to be picked up tomorrow at 6. I need to put in a 25 mile day tomorrow in order to get to Crater Lake by Monday afternoon.

I felt antsy all morning, so I decided to walk downtown. I noticed several hair salons were open with the sign, "walk-ins welcome".

The Sunshine Salon had an opening with only a half-hour wait, so I waited to get my hair and beard cut. I guess I won't have to hack at my beard after all!

Mary was the stylist who helped me. She did a wonderful job and was very interested in my through hike. I really like her and the staff at the salon! I hope you like my new look as well.



I had lunch at the Stone Brewing Company. Their cheese burger, sweet potato fries and double IPA beer was wonderful.

I decided to sit by the pool at the motel because it was a beautiful warm day. At the other end of the pool was Windscreen! He had decided to take a "zero" day and was staying at the motel.



In addition, Hog and Tinker were here too! We lounged there until dinner time, when we all decided to have dinner at the Stone Brewing Company. We were joined there by Magic and Poka-Dot. The food and beer were great!



I had their fish and chips, which were really tasty. However, by the end of dinner I realized that I had too much to drink. I even left the restaurant without my hat! Fortunately, Windscreen grabbed it and the mile walk back to the motel helped to clear my mind.

Tomorrow I am back on the trail. It has been a fun time in Ashland!

Note: you can read more about Mary, my barber, at: <http://ashland.oregon.localsguide.com/mary-brooks-hairstylist-sunshine-salon-16>

## Comments

- [valoriez](#)

July 17, 2015

Love the new look! And I think it's great that you and Willy have made peace. Nice to see you enjoying yourself with a bunch of friends. <3

## Day 93 - Slips, Trips & Falls

Sunday, July 19, 2015

Friday July 17

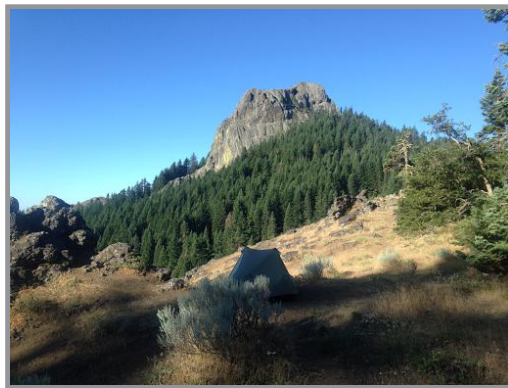
I hit the ground hard. My left shoulder took the brunt of the impact. I felt an odd pain and thought to myself, "this could be the end of my hike."

Earlier this morning, Windscreen and I got a ride from the Ashland Taxi Service to the trail. Windscreen picked up most of the \$16 tab because I had paid for our ride into town. We hit the trail at 6:20.

The trail went through a lot of dense forest so it was difficult to see the trail clearly. I seemed to be able to trip over every rock, root and branch. I also felt tired from last night's fun at the brewery.

There seemed to be a lot of wildlife today. I saw several deer, a black bear cub, a bird that landed on my trekking pole, and chipmunks galore. There were even coyotes yipping in the distance!

The trail passed right by Pilot Rock. Some savvy campers knew where to find a good view.



Peregrine falcons nest in some of the areas around Pilot Rock. Those areas were closed for technical rock climbing.

The trail also passed through an area where the Mardon skipper butterfly lives. The butterfly is a candidate for the endangered species list, and hikers were cautioned to stay on the trail.

When going downhill, I often scurry along quickly. I should have remembered my tendency for tripping. Somehow a root or rock caught my left foot. I tried to maintain my balance, but I couldn't. As I described in the beginning of this blog, I hit the ground hard. My water bottle went flying as did everything in my shirt pocket. I was afraid to move my arm, fearing that I had done real damage. Fortunately, everything seemed OK, but it gave me a real fright!

At midday I stopped at the outlet for Hyatt Reservoir. This was one of the few on-trail sources for water.



There also were large fields filled with a plant that had yellow flowers. Most of the flowers had faded, leaving an incredible spiked top. They were really sharp and hurt when you brushed by them. Does anyone know what they are?



By 5:30 my back and feet were aching. I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1757.0. I hiked 30.5 miles today. The elevation here is 4687 feet.

## Comments

- Erica

July 19, 2015

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I am glad your fall wasn't more serious. I had to take a picture of those yellow flowers on my recent hike as well. They are buggers. It looks like they are called a Yellow Star Thistle. I hope you don't run into too many more of them, or the mother of the black bear cub for that matter.

- JeniR

July 19, 2015

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Don't let the fall shake your confidence- you're doing awesome out there!

I looked up the Mardon Skipper and found they look more moths like than I anticipated. It's nice to hear hikers are encouraged to give them some space.

The Yellow Star Thistle (thanks for finding it's name, Erica) looks like it has one thing on it's mind- poking the heck out of passer-by's. :)

# Day 94 - Lava Rocks

Sunday, July 19, 2015

Saturday July 18

I slept well last night. The soft pine needles made the perfect bed for cowboy camping. I was on the trail at 5:30. I bought a filled donut with chocolate frosting to eat while hiking. After bumping around in my food bag, it was rather messy. I enjoyed it anyway! The trail wound through a forested area for most of the morning. Even though it was sunny, I couldn't wear my sunglasses because it made the trail too dark. I must admit it was rather boring without views. The only animal I saw was a little fawn. I stopped for water at the Brown Mountain shelter. It has a well with great cold water. Windscreens were there along with three other through hikers. The shelter marks the two-thirds complete point for northbound hikers! From the shelter, the trail crossed miles of lava rock. I got a picture of one of the lava fields with Mount McLaughlin in the distance.



I wanted to go 30 miles today, but my back started hurting. I fixed dinner at a rest stop by a creek near highway 140. Just beyond the trail enters the Sky Lakes Wilderness. From here to Crater Lake, there are bad mosquito problems. I ended up hiking with my mosquito head net! I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1783.4. I hiked 26.4 miles today. The elevation here is 5,900 feet.

## Comments

- JeniR

July 19, 2015

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Congratulations on completing two-thirds of the trail!!



## Day 95 - Mosquitoes

Monday, July 20, 2015

Sunday July 19

As I mentioned yesterday, the Sky Lakes Wilderness has a reputation for lots of mosquitoes. When I got ready to go, I didn't have any problems. I was on the trail at 5 because I wanted to have a good day of hiking. I had to use my headlamp for a while because it was so dark.

As soon as it was light, however, clouds of the little beasts attacked. It was like King Kong on the Empire State Building with the airplanes circling. I was King Kong and the mosquitoes were the airplanes. I couldn't out-walk them, and they seemed to know when I was going to swat at them. I finally had to put on my mosquito head net in order to keep my sanity. A few managed to get under the net, but they were swiftly eliminated.

The onslaught continued for over ten miles. Once I stopped to get a drink of water and forgot I had the net on. The water dribbled down the front of my shirt. When I stopped for a break, they would cover my pants. A few managed to bite through my sun gloves!

Although the trail went through the forest for most of the morning, I did see these pretty flowers. Does anyone know what they are?



By afternoon the trail started climbing towards Devils Peak. As soon as it did, there were no more mosquito problems. Thank goodness!

Near the top, I noticed I had cell service. I called my wife and told her about the awesome view of Mount McLaughlin.



The trail finally headed down after reaching 7,300 feet. I was happy to be headed down!



I wanted to hike far enough today so that I would reach Crater Lake by midday. It is 15.6 miles to the highway to Mazama Village.  
I hiked 30.5 miles today! My feet are tired!  
I am camped at PCT mile 1813.9. The elevation here is 6,200 feet.

## Comments

- [Malena](#)

July 20, 2015

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I love reading your blog! What an amazing journey! Your words make me feel like I'm on the trail with you. I'll be going about my day and wonder where the trail has taken you that day and at night hoping and praying you are safe. You are doing great!! Keep on going!! You can do it!!

- [valoriez](#)

July 21, 2015

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It was so thoughtful of you to call me, Bobby. It was so good to hear your voice. I got a junk call here, so my cell phone is working in Spain, which is amazing. Probably expensive though. I'm glad to hear that the mosquitoes didn't eat you alive. Love ya, Valorie

## Day 96 - Crater Lake

Tuesday, July 21, 2015

Monday July 20

I tried to sleep in this morning, but the excitement of seeing my son Paul and his friend Nick got me on the trail at 5! It is almost 16 miles to Mazama Village, so I estimated I'd arrive at noon.

The trail was fairly easy with only a few climbs. A portion passed through a burnt forest. The morning sun was striking.



I got into a rhythm while hiking and arrived at Mazama Village at 10:30. I was really surprised that there was no cell phone service!



No-tent had just arrived so we had lunch together at the Annie Creek restaurant. Kinetic also joined us, since he was waiting for a hiker box to arrive.

Paul and Nick arrived around 2:30. We headed to Klamath Falls and stopped at the local grocery store to get some snacks. We also got steaks and salad for dinner.

Paul had reserved a bread and breakfast house for us, but we needed to wait until 4:30 to meet with the owner. We stopped at the Klamath Brewery and had a beer! The IPA was good enough that we brought a growler with us.

The BnB was wonderful. Here is a picture of the lady that owns the place.



I was able to do laundry and take a shower while Paul and Nick made dinner. We had an amazing salad along with barbecued steak. My brother Ron sent along several beers which we enjoyed during and after dinner. The Black Diamond Pizza and Deli cheese cake was heavenly!

Many, many "thank you's" to Tara, Kathy, Ron, and everyone else who sent care packages. I now have camp shoes, spices and goodies!

It was wonderful sitting in the shade and watching a hawk fly overhead, humming birds at the feeder, and deer with a little faun wandering across the lawn. It has been an amazing day!

## Comments

- [valoriez](#)

July 21, 2015

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Oh, so happy to hear that you and Paul successfully connected! And that the cheesecake arrived safely. :-) It was hard to keep that secret while talking with you on the phone.

I'm chuckling to myself that you are finally seeing a deer at Crater Lake! Ha!

Scarlett and I both arrived in A Coruna safe and sound, if exhausted. Since we went to sleep so early, we're both up before 5am, LOL! And breakfast doesn't begin until 8. Today is the day to explore the town before others begin arriving.

Love ya,

Valorie

PS: Hi again Nick!

- [IanWoods](#)

July 21, 2015

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Bob I've been following your blog from the beginning. What an adventure - very inspiring! Your trip to my home town of Klamath Falls finally prompted me to post a comment. It sounds like you are staying strong and having a great time. Good luck and

happy hiking on the last third!



## Day 97 - Flying High

Wednesday, July 22, 2015

Tuesday July 21

With the arrival yesterday of my son Paul and his friend Nick, I didn't think a day could get better. But today was superb!

I managed to "sleep in" until 6:30. Once up, I packed my backpack and loaded up with 4 liters of water.

Paul was already up having fixed coffee and cantaloupe. Both were tasty. Paul said the deer had visited again and the little fawn had spots. I took one last picture of the house, which is called "Country Treasure".



We had a great breakfast in Klamath Falls. I enjoyed a Denver omelette with country fries.

Now for the best part. Nick took us up in his airplane! We flew over Crater Lake and followed the PCT northward all the way past the Three Sisters. I used my phone app (Guthook's PCT) to show us where the trail was relative to the airplane. It was fantastic!



When we returned, we headed back to Crater Lake. We stopped at the Rim Village where we had a great lunch eating the goodies sent by my brother Ron. I boiled water and we heated stew, pasta and corn soup. They were all fabulous. We also had muffins. For dessert I had the last piece of cheesecake! Paul and I shared a beer.



What a splendid way to celebrate! They dropped me off at the trailhead and I headed north. I felt sad having to leave such good company, but I have miles to go before this adventure is over!

Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone who helped make this visit so wonderful! I managed to hike for three hours on the Crater Lake Rim trail. Of course the lake is beautiful!



I camped at the Grouse Hill camp at 5:30. I am at PCT mile 1843.2. I hiked 9.1 miles today. The elevation here is 6,646 feet.

## Day 98 - Mount Thielsen Wilderness

Wednesday, July 22, 2015

Wednesday July 22

I fell asleep last night in my hiking clothes. I used my sleeping bag as a cover as I slept on my air mattress. By morning, however, it was really chilly and I bundled tighter and tighter in my sleeping bag. I was too tired to zip it up or to rummage through my clothes bag for my down jacket. Perhaps tonight I will wear my jacket!

The other oddity last night was how quiet it was. Usually I will hear birds or snapping branches. I heard nothing. There wasn't any wind either. I wonder if the lack of water has a significant impact on animal populations?

I got up a bit later and was on the trail just before 6. It was easy hiking with the trail pretty level for many miles. Unfortunately the trail passed through a pine forest with no view, so it was somewhat boring. I think I was also recovering from yesterday's excitement.

At 9 I entered the Thielsen Wilderness. I remember seeing Mount Thielsen from the air on our flight yesterday. It didn't look very impressive then, but it looks pretty awesome from the trail.



At one of the high points, I could just make out the snowy tops of the Three Sisters mountains.



By 12:30 I made it to Thielsen creek, the first water source since leaving Crater Lake. Since the next reliable source isn't for 16 miles, I decided to carry another 1.5 liters so I can dry camp tonight.

I also made it to the high point for the PCT in Oregon, 7,560 feet.



I stopped early because I found a good camping spot and I already had almost 24 miles for today. The extra bonus is that I have phone service!  
I am camped at PCT mile 1866.9. The elevation here is 7,386 feet.

## Comments

- AnneEZJones

July 22, 2015

The lake is SO PRETTY! It sounds like you had a great "break", even if it wasn't very long. It's amazing what good company does for the mind and spirit! I'm so glad Paul was able to make the trip and get a little trail magic your way! I wish I could have been there to see you and participate in your wonderful day, Dad! I miss you and hope to see you soon. Keep strong and love you more than you know!

a

- AnneEZJones

July 22, 2015

I am so happy there are more photos with YOU in them!! The views are amazing and beautiful, but when you get to be in the photo with the pretty view or plant, it makes the photo sixty times better! Face it Dad, we want to see the views too, but it's that lovely head of yours with your smile that make us all come back for the story of the daY. I still don't know how you walk/ok it's really hiking 30.0 miles (+ most days!!!!)! I want to see your face and make sure you're still okay. I'm not worried that you can't do it, because I think you have already proven that you're in this to the end! We love you and want to make sure you can get the best care if it ever be needed down the trail at some point.

I love you Daddy! Can hardly wait to see you in the next few weeks...month or so until you get close enough for us to bug you

a ♥ You!!

- valoriez

July 23, 2015

I'm so happy that the trail magic trip went well! I feel SO far away at this point, on the

other side of the world. However, I hope to see you in less than two weeks. Gosh, I felt great that we walked almost 8 miles yesterday. But of course you put us in the shadow even on an "off" day, lol! Love ya, Valorie

- [valoriez](#)

July 23, 2015

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Gosh it's pretty! I agree with Anne -- more selfies! Love ya Bobby, Valorie

- [JeniR](#)

July 23, 2015

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What a wonderful escape for you all! You've been attached to the trail for so long, it must have felt like an out of body experience to be so high above it in the airplane.

- [AnneEZJones](#)

July 23, 2015

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Now that's what I'm talking about, Dad! Those pictures (with you in them) are absolutely stunning! At first sight they look photoshopped! You know it's a beautiful shot when you keep looking at it to find fault and can't find it!! Most of all, I must say, I love to see your smiling face upon a beautiful background! The places you are seeing must be on many people's "bucket lists" as they are so (sorry to keep repeating the same thing..... But.....) BEAUTIFUL! I can see why this entire trail is worth hiking and why people take the time to travel the entire thing! Pictures can't replace the actual memory but they sure can help spread the word of how special it truly is! Please keep sharing it with YOUR WORLD! I like being part of your world, Dad!

Love You!!

a



## Day 99 - Summit Lake

Friday, July 24, 2015

Thursday July 23

When I start hiking in the morning, I rarely have a specific destination in mind. Rather, I know that I have to hike a minimum number of miles in order to make it to my next resupply without running out of food. For this section, I need to average 21.6 miles per day. I usually try to hike additional miles in the first several days so that on the last day there are fewer miles to hike to reach my destination.

This morning I knew that the availability of water was going to be a determining factor. A reliable water source was 19.4 miles away, with the one after that another 9 miles. I planned to go to the first source at 19.4 miles. If I felt good and still had plenty of water to drink, I would go on to the next water source. If I was tired or didn't think I could hike another 9 miles, I would fill up and carry an extra 1.5 liters so I could dry camp.

The trail this morning headed down the mountain and into the forest. There were very few views, and when I could see out, I saw more tree-covered hills. I got to Windigo pass at 11:30. Someone had left a cache of water! I only needed to fill my 16 oz bottle and had not used any of the other 2 liters I was carrying. This is what the cache looks like.



From here the trail climbed 1,400 feet. Halfway up was the trail to the first water source, but I was feeling good and decided to try to make it to Summit Lake. Once over the top, the trail dropped almost 2,000 feet. I arrived at the lake and found a campsite by 4. I had beans and rice for dinner, seasoned with "slap yo mama". It was yummy! I took this picture a few feet from my campsite.



I am camped at PCT mile 1896.1. I hiked 29.2 miles today. The elevation here is 5,462

feet.

## Comments

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

July 24, 2015

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Looks like a beautiful spot, Dad! Glad you enjoyed the spice mix. Feel free to let us know if you need any more and we can arrange to get it into one of your resupply boxes.

- [AnneEZJones](#)

July 24, 2015

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Quick question I've been curious about... Do you have a little tri-pod for picture taking or are there enough hikers around to ask to take a picture for you? Or maybe you really are magic, like I've been thinking the past few months, and have the ability to make the camera get these stunning shots of you on this beautiful adventure of yours?

Looks pretty warm, what has the weather been doing in Southern Oregon? Cooled down a bit I hope!

Stay safe, hydrated, and rested!

Love you, Daddy!!

Little a

- [valoriez](#)

July 25, 2015

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Glad to hear you found water! and are well. See you soon! I love you, Valorie

# Day 100 - Shelter Cove Resort

Saturday, July 25, 2015

Friday July 24

One hundred days hiking the Pacific Crest Trail! A lot has happened in those 100 days. All of the days in the green desert. The physically challenging high Sierras followed by the equally difficult mountains of Northern California.

I didn't take many pictures today. The trail from Summit Lake went through the forest and up to the ridge again. I could see the Three Sisters in the distance.

My goal was the resort on Odell Lake, called Shelter Cove Resort. It was a 17 mile hike and I arrived just before noon.



No-Tent was there, and Cut-Finger arrived a few hours later. I got my resupply box and bought a few extra snacks to get me to my next resupply in four days at the Big Lake Youth Camp. I will need to hike 21.7 miles a day to arrive in four days.

My biggest concern today was to charge up my electronics. It is likely that I won't have power again until Timberline Lodge, about 9 days from today. The store had an electrical outlet, so I plugged in my battery backup right away. It was fully recharged in three hours. I'm crossing my fingers that it will last until I arrive at Timberline Lodge!

I also hope my stove has enough fuel to last 7 more days. I already have 6 boils from the fuel canister. I should be able to get 7 more (crossing my fingers)! The store didn't have any cartridges for sale, so I will make do with what I have. I called my hiking buddy, Deb, from the trail and asked her to bring a new fuel canister to Timberline Lodge.

I took a 3-minute shower and No-Tent did our laundry. I should have clean socks now until my next resupply.

I ate as much store food as possible including a hot dog with all the fixings, a couple of pieces of pizza, a muffin and several beers to pack it all in. I was hoping to rent a room or cabin, but they are all full. I opted to camp in the area for PCT hikers.

I head back out tomorrow and will be excited to see the Three Sisters Wilderness.

I am camped tonight at Shelter Cove, PCT mile 1912.8. The elevation here is 4,867 feet.

## Comments

- PaulZimmerman

July 25, 2015

Congratulations on making it through the 100 day mark! Glad that you got a shower and an afternoon of rest before the next leg of your journey. I'm surprised that you've had

Internet connectivity as much as you have this week...hope it continues so we can hear about your travels!

- JeniR

July 25, 2015

You just keep knocking down milestones on your journey- 100 days on the trail is VERY impressive, congratulations! I don't know many people that could actually do that! Thanks so much for allowing us (all) to be along for the ride!!

- AnneEZJones

July 25, 2015

100 DAYS and nearing 2000 MILES! I'll echo the other comments and congratulate you on your incredible feat! Honestly Dad, I don't even drive in our car that many miles in that time period! Truly amazing! You keep giving me hope that one of these days (even if it isn't until I retire from the working world) that a hobby could become a life enriching experience to share with my loved ones, too! Not discounting your working at Boeing for a career of nearing 40 years!!! That impressive in just the sentence itself.... But you give me hope that I can find this kind of hobby to inspire myself to do something like you are doing now! That might sound dumb or weird but it is seriously giving me hope that maybe one day I'll be able to travel around the world and dig for gemstones and make a life for myself maybe somewhere in that hobby??..... For when I finally pull myself together and actually take the next step. Like YOU! My inspiration! My hope! And it's so hard to get to point A to B sometimes not knowing if you'll have enough water, or FOOD! Or power for your electronics. I don't know how to say it really, Daddy. You inspire me every single day! Every! Day! Thank you for being you and doing things your all out, perfectionist ways that gives me little joys in seeing the simple yet perfect things in my life and try to make my little life workings perfect as I can make them. Sorry to ramble on so long, I know you need to preserve battery life for the next long leg of the trip! I love you! I admire your strength and courageous spirit!

Hope to hear your voice soon,  
little a to the e, to the z to the j!

- AnneEZJones

July 25, 2015

Jeni,

It is so wonderful to see you commenting! You and your sisters mean so much to us (as a family then and even the years when everyone was busy with life and everything) but so happy a re-connect happened! 100% honesty, you and your sisters were the ones I looked up to and wanted to be identity you three. I wanted to be the 4th sister. And you guys did a wonderful job of including me in so much. Two words for you for being my childhood idol.... Thank you!

You three will always mean so much to me. For ever and all time!  
Love you Jeni!

Little anne

- valoriez

July 26, 2015

Fantastic to read both this blog and the comments today! One hundred days, Bob! Congratulations on your accomplishment. I'm glad to hear you say "9 days" because this means I will possibly be able to see you. I hope. Things are good here in Spain; working hard as usual, and also having fun as usual. I was planning on walking from the hostel to the uni every day, but so far have failed in that. Still getting in lots of walking, but nothing in comparison to you! See you soon, Valorie

- JeniR

July 26, 2015

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The magnificent journey your Dad embarked on is so compelling, fun and inspirational... we can't keep away from it if we wanted to!

I am grateful we reconnected as well- you and your family were so very important to us and instrumental in helping us through our many hardships... we're lucky we had YOU!! Not to mention it was YOUR house in 1986, on Paul's birthday, that Cody and I met... and look how that turned out!?! :) It was a shame to lose the connection for a while but, WE'RE BACK!

Btw, we absolutely consider you our honorary sister! We so looked forward to seeing you every summer and playing until the late summer sun would finally call it a night! ;)

Love you lots & lots, Anne!

~Jeni



# Day 101 - Three Sisters Wilderness

Sunday, July 26, 2015

Saturday July 25

The camping in the PCT hiker area at the Shelter Cove Resort costs \$8. I guess it covers the cost of potable water and the use of the outhouse. Otherwise, we were told to walk to site 33 and find a flat spot in the woods. I must say there were a lot of flat spots and I didn't have any problems with critters in the night. However, the nearby train did go by at 2 AM and blew its whistle, waking everyone in camp. I figure that my \$8 showed support for their efforts to assist through hikers.

I packed up at first light, and hiked the road and side trail a mile until it rejoined the PCT. The trail climbed 1,200 feet over the ridge and repeated this as it crossed several other ridges.

The views were sparse today because the trail stayed mainly in the forest and because it was mostly cloudy. There is a 30% chance of rain tonight.

I love Saturdays when there are others on the trail. I talked to several groups about my through hike and it was fun telling about my adventure. One gentleman was so interested that he is going to check out my blog! The conversations put a new bounce in my step.

I took a break at Charlton Lake and replenished my water. It was warm in the sun.



Soon I walked through another area burned by a lightning caused fire. The fire was called the Charlton Fire and it burned over 10,000 acres. The fire happened almost 20 years ago. When I looked around all I could see were burnt trees in every direction. The good news is that young trees are beginning to grow and pretty wildflowers were everywhere.



I just entered the Three Sisters Wilderness area. I decided to camp at Brahma Lake since my feet and legs are tired. It's rather windy and chilly tonight, and I am already wearing my down vest.



I am camped at PCT mile 1939.3. I hiked 26.5 miles today (plus a one mile road walk). The elevation here is 5,697 feet.

## Comments

- [PaulZimmerman](#)

July 26, 2015

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Looks like you found a pretty little lake to camp by! It rained a bit here on Friday night, but has been dry for the rest of the weekend until now. Hope that you are far enough south to avoid the rain!

## Day 102 - Lakes & Ponds

Monday, July 27, 2015

Sunday July 26

I knew I was going to be hiking through beautiful country in the Three Sisters Wilderness, but I was not prepared for this!

All morning I passed lake after lake and pond after pond. Some lakes were large and deep, with ducks swimming about, birds singing, and fish rising for their morning meal, leaving a ripple on the surface. Many ponds were small, maybe an acre, with submerged logs and grass crowding the shore. There were lakes and ponds with lily pads and frogs all around the little streams. At one point the trail passed a campsite that was between two difficult lakes. A fly fisherman could catch a fish casting either direction!

When I wasn't passing by lakes, I traveled through forests where blueberries and huckleberries were in abundance. The huckleberry bushes are tiny, growing no taller than a foot high. Some had itsy-bitty teeny-weenie berries. Some had no berries at all.



The blueberry bushes were knee to waist high. Some had a few berries; most had no berries at all. If I was making pancakes, I would have had fresh blueberries in them! I did stop occasionally to sample a ripe berry.

Unfortunately, there were low clouds all day and it was rather cool. I had to hike hard and fast to keep warm. At the top of one hill, I know there was a beautiful view, but I just saw clouds hugging the hilltops.



When I got to Sisters Mirror Lake, I was hoping that I could see the reflection of the mountains in the lake. Unfortunately it was still cloudy and a breeze ripped the water. As I

was heading up the trail, a nice couple stopped to chat. They were amazed that I was doing a through hike. I told them about the difficulties going through the Sierras and that I had lost almost 30 pounds. I look like a war refugee from some prison camp! To my amazement, they gave me half of their sandwich! Of course a hiker never refuses food! I graciously thanked them.



I was going to save the sandwich for dinner, but it looked so good that I ate it as I hiked along. The fresh tomato, lettuce, cheese and spices between whole wheat bread melted in my mouth! It was wonderful! Many thanks to such generous folks from Portland! The trail then crossed a two mile wide pumice field and an amazing volcanic outflow.



By 4:30 I found a campsite and had beef stroganoff with pepperoni bits, Fritos and olive oil. Of course, I had my cup of hot chocolate!  
I am camped tonight at PCT mile 1969.9. I hiked 30.7 miles today. The elevation here is 6,081 feet.



## Day 103 - Mount Washington Wilderness

Tuesday, July 28, 2015

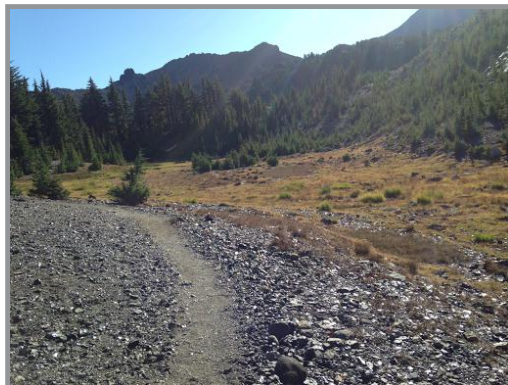
Monday July 27

My air mattress sprung a leak last night. I ended up sleeping on my Zlite mattress, which certainly is not as comfortable when sleeping on hard ground. I decided that I would stop at South Matthieu lake, about 15 miles away, dunk the mattress in the lake to check for leaks, and try to repair it. I have plenty of time since I am within 30 miles of my next resupply.

I got on the trail at 5:50 and noticed that the sky was starting to clear. I might get to see the Three Sisters after all! Sure enough, it wasn't long before I had some nice views.



I then passed through the Obsidian Limited Entry area. This is a two mile area that has an abundance of obsidian, a dark volcanic rock from which the natives used to make arrowheads. A special permit is required for entry into the area. My long-distance hiking permit grants me access. The rocks sparkle in the sunlight.



The trail climbed several lava flows. The hiking was difficult because the trail was covered with sharp, abrasive volcanic rock. Often the rocks would roll under my feet. Occasionally I could feel a sharp rock through the sole of my shoe, or worse yet, poking the side of my foot. I'm sure it put a lot of wear on my shoes.





At noon I reached South Matthieu lake. I dunked my air mattress and found two small leaks. Fortunately I had a repair kit, and I patched the holes. I felt good about my field repairs!

By mid-afternoon the trail climbed another lava flow for two miles. It was difficult hiking and my legs were tired. Even after the trail left the lava flow, the area is entirely comprised of volcanic rocks. The trail is littered with all sizes of rocks, making it difficult to walk without stumbling. I decided to camp at 3:30.

I am camped at PCT mile 1995.1. I hiked 25.2 miles today. The elevation here is 5,329 feet.

By the way, I am laying here on my repaired air mattress! So far so good. Yippee!

# Day 104 - Big Lake Youth Camp

Tuesday, July 28, 2015

Tuesday July 28

It was windy until midnight last night. I camped in a burn area, but I was sheltered near a growth of new trees. During one gust, I heard a loud "crack" and then the screech as a tree was falling! It hit not more than 20 feet from my tent! I guess that's just one more thing I need to watch!

Also, my air mattress still has a small leak somewhere. I had to blow more air into it twice during the night. I'll check it out again when I get to Big Lake Youth Camp.

I was on the trail at 5:45. Fortunately the trail was easy walking; no more lava rocks! I reached the camp shortly before 8 and got my resupply box.



They have a special building for PCT hikers. First, however, I had breakfast at their cafeteria. They serve only vegetarian dishes. The scrambled eggs had broccoli in it. I also had hot cereal and two bowls of cold cereal along with slices of pear.

I put together my food for the next 5 days. I still need some snacks, but the camp store didn't open until 9:30. One of the camp staff was headed shopping, and she agreed to pick up some pastries for me.

I took a shower and assembled my dirty clothes. They do your laundry and have it ready by 6 PM.

I took my air mattress down to the lake, inflated it, and checked for leaks. I couldn't find any for the longest time until I spotted it. I brought it back to the hiker building and put a patch on it. Hopefully it is fully repaired now.

While at the lake, some of the campers were out boating.



I had lunch at the cafeteria. There was cheese lasagna, cooked green beans, and a crisp apple. I went back for a second helping!

The camp store had very little in the way of snacks. I managed to get enough to last me for the next five days.

The camp does not charge for their services, but will accept donations. I put a good sum into their donation box.

At 6, the camp had a fire drill. Everyone evacuated to the parking lot. I checked to see how our laundry was doing; they hadn't even finished washing.

I went to dinner and had watermelon, pizza and green salad. They also had chocolate milk which was "oh, so good!"



Camp policy requires PCT hikers to camp offsite. I needed my clothes from the laundry in order to pack up and leave. After dinner, I found all the clothes still in the washing machine, so I took out my clothes. My socks will dry hanging from the back of my pack and my hiking pants will be dry after a half hour of hiking.

I left camp at 7:30 and made it back to the trail by 8. I quickly found a flat spot and was in bed by 8:30. I think that's the quickest I have ever set up camp!

The Big Lake Youth Camp was an extremely enjoyable time. Good food (and lots of it), lots of friendly staff, a great hiker cabin, phone service, WiFi, showers, and a camp store. I even got pastries delivered to me! The only improvements would have been to let us do our own laundry and to have a better selection of hiking food.

I am camped tonight at PCT mile 2003.8. The elevation here is 4,702 feet.

# Day 105 - Mount Jefferson Wilderness

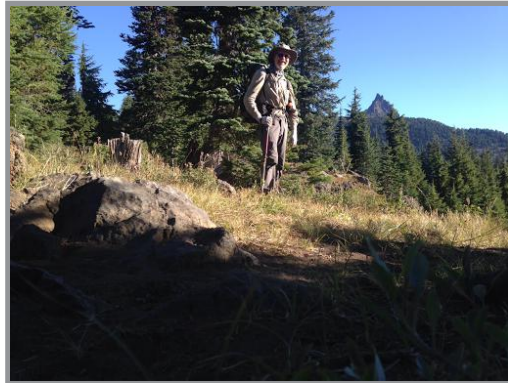
Thursday, July 30, 2015

Wednesday July 29

My air mattress is fixed! There might still be a tiny leak, but it stayed sufficiently inflated all night.

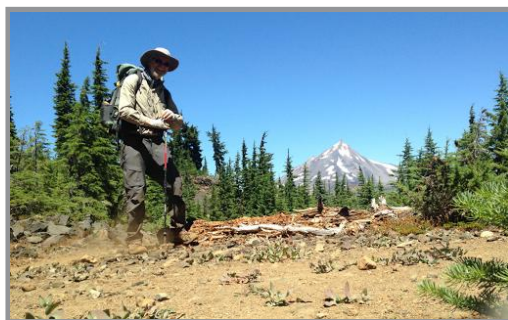
I think I know what punctured it. All of the holes were towards the bottom of the mattress. When it was warm at night, I would unzip my sleeping bag and use it as a cover when it cooled at night. Since I have a mummy bag, it will only unzip down to my ankles. I stick my feet in the pocket at the bottom. The sleeping bag is designed to have the zipper underneath me. As I slept, my legs would push down on the zipper pull. With enough pressure, it would poke a hole. Now I will position the zipper on top. Hopefully, there will be no more holes!

I woke up at first light and was on the trail by 5:30. When I reached highway 20, Santiam Pass, I entered the Mount Jefferson Wilderness. The trail then climbed 1,800 feet to the base of Three Fingered Jack.



On the way up, I saw a herd of elk. They quickly disappeared into the forest before I could take a picture.

As the trail climbed beyond Three Fingered Jack, Mount Jefferson came into view.



For the rest of the day I got closer and closer to the mountain. As a bonus, there were a lot of ripe blueberries. I had to pause a couple of times to pick a few.



By the way, the trail today was exceptionally dusty, sometimes with an inch of dust. When the breeze blew from behind, I ended up walking in a dust cloud!

By 4, I was tired, mainly because I am carrying 5 days of food and enough water to dry camp. The pack felt heavier and heavier as the day wore on.

I found a nice campsite nestled in the trees, although there are pesky yellow jackets buzzing around my tent.

I am camped tonight at PCT mile 2031.3. I hiked 27.5 miles today. The elevation here is 5,749 feet.

Did you notice?



Next to the rocks was a ziplock bag. A note said, "Congratulations on reaching mile 2000! Roll yourself a joint!" I didn't, but I thought the message was cute!



## Day 106 - Olallie Resort

Friday, July 31, 2015

Thursday July 30

"Strength from a butterfly and the hoot of an owl."

I got on the trail at 5:15. There was just enough light to see. It was really warm, too, probably in the 70's. I wasn't feeling very well and might have had a slight fever. I felt clammy and hot.

Fortunately the first few miles headed downhill. When it came to heading uphill, however, I felt really weak. That's when it happened. I know people are going to say Bobaroo has lost his mind, but I'll tell it anyway. All of a sudden a white butterfly flew in front of me up the trail and at the same time an owl began hooting in the forest. Then I swear I heard a whisper in my head, "Strength from a butterfly and the hoot of an owl." From that moment on, it was as if I was re-energized. I no longer felt clammy or weak. I can't explain it, but that's exactly what happened. Perhaps I am losing my mind! If so, it made the day very enjoyable!

By mid morning I climbed to Jefferson Park, a large meadow with regulated camp sites. It is regulated due to overuse, and campers can only camp in specific areas. There are also fabulous views of the north side of Mount Jefferson, which has several large glaciers.



Beyond Jefferson Park, the trail climbed steeply to the top of a ridge where I got my first view of Mount Hood. If my head wasn't in the way, you could see it too!



I found out that there is a small store on Olallie lake at the Olallie Lake Resort. The resort is very near the trail. I hurried all afternoon and arrived at 2:30.



I bought and enjoyed a couple of cold beers and a Pepsi. They also had canister fuel, so I bought one because I might run out before getting to Timberline Lodge. I found out that the temperature today was above 90, so it had been sweaty hiking all afternoon. I decided to hike a few more miles and camped at Jude lake. It was so warm that I decided to take a swim. The lake bottom was really muddy and I churned it up as I paddled around. It sure felt good, but I hope I don't get swimmers itch! By the way, I have not heard any more whispering. I have not seen any more white butterflies or heard any more hooting owls. But I feel great tonight! I am camped tonight at PCT mile 2058. I hiked 26.8 miles today. The elevation here is 4,730 feet.

## Day 107 - Billy Goat!

Saturday, August 01, 2015

Friday July 31

Last night, two other campers came in after I was in bed. One just before dark, and the other after dark. It is impossible to set up camp without making noise, and the one who arrived after dark made plenty. The result was that I didn't get to sleep until 11. It made for a short night.

I was on the trail at 5:30. The literature says that this portion of the trail is the least interesting because there are very few views. I would have to agree. I saw Mount Hood once, and that was through the trees. Most of the day was spent in mature forests. It's not the greatest picture, but gives a general idea of the trail today.



At about 8, I saw an older gentleman coming towards me. He had a bushy beard. I said "Good morning!", and we stopped to chat. He had started at Timberline Lodge, and was headed south for 600 miles. He had a ULA backpack, similar to mine. When I asked him his trail name, he said it was "Billy Goat".



I was astonished! Standing in front of me was one of the legendary hikers of the PCT. Some say he lives on the trail. For certain he has hiked it many times. There even is a cave in Southern California that is called "Billy Goat's cave". We talked about the trail to Timberline Lodge. He said it was in really good shape, except I should be aware that the last mile to the lodge was fairly steep uphill and the trail was deep sand. We also talked about water caches. He is completely against them. They are like litter on the landscape. I finally said my goodbyes and was so thankful to have met this kind man!

The rest of the day seemed to go quickly. I stopped several times to get water, since the temperature was in the 90's. By 4:30 I filled up with water at the last reliable location until Timberline Lodge. I got 1.5 liters extra because I planned to dry camp. I had spaghetti and meat sauce together with bacon bits and olive oil. I also drank a liter of water. I finished off the evening with a sit-bath. Ah, I feel better now! I am camped at PCT mile 2089.4. I hiked 31.4 miles today. The elevation here is 3,301 feet.

## Day 108 - Timberline Lodge

Saturday, August 01, 2015

Saturday August 1

I know there are a few who will be upset that it only took me 3.5 days to hike 106 miles. In fact, I'm a bit surprised myself. I had allowed 5 days in my planning.

However, there are a few reasons why it happened. First, there were a few areas where camping was not allowed. I would have stopped earlier but had to push on to get to a "legal" camping spot. Last night, I had to get to the last reliable water source in order to have enough water for the hike to the lodge. Also, the condition of the trail makes a huge difference in the number of miles covered each day. If the trail is rocky, it makes for slow going. If the trail is smooth, I can average over three miles per hour. For the most part, the trail from Big Lake Youth Camp has been fast. I have been able to get about 12 miles by 10 AM. By 1 PM I usually have 20 miles. If I hike another couple hours, I have 25 or more miles. It just happens.

This morning I was on the trail by 5:30. I knew it was about 18 miles to Timberline Lodge. However, I also knew there was a long climb to get there, and a sandy uphill climb the last mile. As it turned out, it wasn't that difficult and I arrived at the lodge at noon.

I did manage to get a picture of the mountain when I was about ten miles away.

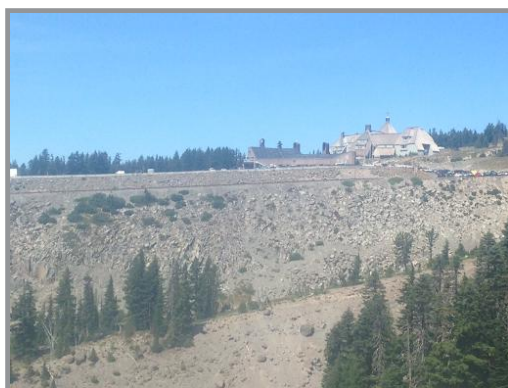


Also, I do take breaks, especially if it is hot or later in the day when I am tired. I was 2 miles from the lodge when I decided to take a break and drink more water. A lady named Marnie kindly took my photo.





On the steep uphill sandy portion of the trail, I was tantalized by the view of the lodge in the distance. I used the herringbone technique with my shoes to get better traction in the sand.



When I was walking down to the lodge, I saw a familiar face. It was Willie! He was just getting back on the trail, having spent a zero day in Government Camp. He is doing really well now and will be at least two days ahead of me.



I got the last room available at the lodge. It was really expensive, but there was an extra bed in the room if I could find someone to share it with. I spent all afternoon asking

through-hikers if they wanted to share, but had no luck. In the mean time, I managed to have two lunches and a dinner! I finally feel full!

I also did my laundry. There was so little that I washed everything in the sink and hung it by the open window to dry.

By dinner time, I saw a through hiker standing by the building. It was Tinker, a hiker I have met at several of my resupply points. I offered to share the room and he agreed to take it. At least a spare bed doesn't go unused!

I told my hiking buddy, Deb, that I had arrived early. She is coming tomorrow to camp at Clear Lake. Hopefully I can camp with them. I still plan to take Monday as a zero day, so hopefully my wife can join me before I leave again. I haven't seen her for over 100 days! Deb also has my resupply box with my new shoes. My feet will really appreciate that! I likely will need to go to Government Camp to get a few snacks.

I also called Cody, an old friend who wants to meet up with me. Tentatively we will get together when I arrive at Cascade Locks.

It has been a busy day. The lodge is beautiful, and has many expensive restaurants.

I am anxious to see my wife, Deb, and Cody & Jenessa!

I have reached (Guthook's) PCT mile 2107. Half-mile maps show me at 2094. The elevation here is 5,955 feet.

## Day 109 - Camp Creek Campground

Monday, August 03, 2015

Sunday August 2

I liked staying at Timberline Lodge. It is an amazing building. The room was adequate, and the bed was comfortable. However, there is no air conditioning. Last night it was really warm, so I opened the windows and turned on a fan. The unfortunate side effect was that now I could hear all of the noise from the parking lot. There was a wedding at the lodge, and I could hear a lot of commotion all night. The room finally cooled down by 4 AM.

I went down for the "all you can eat" breakfast buffet. As it turned out, several other hikers were also there and we all sat together.



The food was terrific and we all left very satisfied. Tinker, my roommate, left for the trail at nine and I checked out.

Bob and Deb called me at 11:30 and we went to the Camp Creek campground. The campground is a USFS pay site and there is a resident "camp host". They already had their tent set up at a site right next to Clear creek. There was a nice flat spot where I set up my tent.

Deb had brought my resupply box. I got new shoes and put together my food for the hike from Timberline Lodge to Cascade Locks. It is about 45 miles and should take two days.



I am excited to be able to hike with Deb. It should be a fun hike!

My wife arrives back home tonight from Spain. I am hoping she will come down to see me before I get back on the trail the day after tomorrow.

I am camped tonight at the Camp Creek campground. The elevation here is 2,263 feet.

# Day 110 - Walking with Deb

Tuesday, August 04, 2015

Monday August 3

I slept soundly last night. I think it was the soothing sound of Clear Creek and a quiet campground that did it.

This morning, Deb made coffee while her husband Bob rekindled the campfire. I had very little phone service, so I checked every half-hour to see if my wife was going to try to join us.

After a short morning walk, Deb made a delicious breakfast of eggs, hash browns, bacon and toast. I even got seconds!

By 11, I decided to try to call my wife to see how she was feeling. Jet lag after a flight home from Spain can really sap your energy. Bob drove me to the store in the town of Rhododendron. I had good enough phone service to call home. As it turned out, my wife was doing laundry and still had to pay bills. We decided that it wouldn't make sense to try to drive for four hours just to be here a few hours. Instead, she will meet me either in Cascade Locks or Trout Lake.

I suggested to Deb that we leave for the trail this afternoon, rather than waiting until tomorrow morning. We decided to leave as soon as I could pack up!

Bob drove us to Timberline Lodge and Deb and I were on the trail by 1 PM.



The first few miles were fairly easy as the trail dropped down to the Zigzag river. The river crossing was fairly easy.



The climb up from the river was more of a challenge. I waited for Deb whenever I came to



a trail junction. The trail then dropped again. At one point there was an amazing view of Mount Hood.



The trail then descended to the Sandy River. It was 5 PM and we found campsites by the river.

I had Chili Mac with Fritos, pepperoni and olive oil. I had two desserts: a moon pie and a muffin. Deb brought some red wine, so we each had a glass.

Deb forgot a belt for her pants, so she will try to use safety pins instead. Also, she was feeling a hot spot on one of her toes, so we taped it with Leukotape.

It was a great afternoon of hiking. We are camped at PCT mile 2115.9. The elevation here is 3,480 feet. We hiked 8.9 miles this afternoon.

# Day 111 - Ramona Falls

Wednesday, August 05, 2015

Tuesday August 4

Last night I was almost asleep when I heard a loud "thud" about twenty feet from the tent. A huge dead branch had fallen from one of the tall fir trees! It worries me that sometime I might not be so lucky.

Perhaps the anxiety from the falling branch made me dream that I had taken a trail in the night back to my house, but realized I had forgotten to tell Deb that I had left. I was hurrying back on the trail to get to the camp when I woke up. What a crazy dream! This morning I noticed it is later now before the sun comes up. I used to be able to get up before 5, but now it is barely light. I was up at 5:15. Deb and I got packed up and were on the trail by 6.

I realized that the river we camped by last night was not the Sandy river. It was a stream feeding into it. We had several river crossings to make. The Sandy river was the most difficult. The river is fed by meltwater from a glacier on Mount Hood. The water is silty and flowing quickly. It is impossible to see how deep the water is, plus the unstable rocks on the edge make it difficult to get around. I managed to step from a log to a rock and then rock-hop across. It was too far of a step for Deb to cross in the same place. We had to walk upstream where there were some small logs placed together. Deb was able to cross there.

In a riverbed like this, it is difficult to find the trail. We searched for fifteen minutes before finding rock cairns marking the trail.

Soon we came to the Ramona Falls trail. The falls are beautiful.



From here the trail crossed the Muddy Fork river. We were able to cross the river on a pair of logs. There was also a rope to hold onto, which made the crossing much safer. The next challenge was the climb up from the river to the ridge above, about 1,500 feet in two miles. It was difficult enough for me to trudge my way to the top. I felt bad for Deb, so I dropped my pack at the top and headed back down to see how she was doing. She had made it 2/3 of the way up over the steepest part of the trail. I helped her finish the last third.

We then dropped off the ridge down to Lolo Pass where the trail crosses a paved road. Of course the trail then climbs another 900 feet to the ridge top. By now Deb was feeling like her pack had an anchor on it. We got water and found a ridge top campsite.

On the ridge we could see Mount Adams and below us we could see Lost Lake with lots of boats and development around its shores.



On the menu tonight was rice with chicken, combined tastefully with Fritos, a splash of olive oil, and seasoned with a dash of "slap yo mama".  
I am camped tonight at PCT mile 2130.2. We hiked 14.3 miles. The elevation here is 4,244 feet.

## Day 112 - Cascade Locks

Wednesday, August 05, 2015

Wednesday August 5

What a night! Deb and I camped on a ridge last night. I assumed that the wind would die down overnight. It didn't. My tent made a flapping noise as the wind gusts hit it. I tried pushing on the sides of the tent and even tried changing the length of the tent pole to quiet the flapping. Nothing worked. I was very tired in the morning.

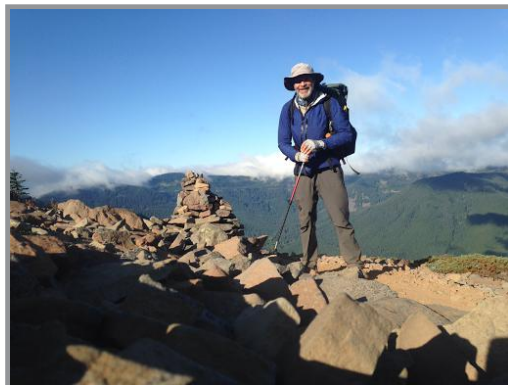
We arose at 5:15. I realized that one tent stake was missing but couldn't find it. In addition, fog had rolled in and water started dripping from the trees. It was so cold I could see my breath.

We headed up the trail at 5.45, glad to be moving so we could warm up. The trail followed the ridge-line, so it climbed and fell for much of the morning.

Deb had not eaten any dinner last night and was sick to her stomach. There wasn't anything I could do for her other than suggest she try eating something with carbohydrates. She decided to eat a Fig Newton bar.

I think all of the stress of hiking so many hours really affected her. However, she kept hiking because we wanted to get to Cascade Locks today.

It was six miles to Indian Springs where we would take a trail to the Eagle Creek trail. Just before the trail junction, the fog cleared enough to see the surrounding hills.



We took the Indian Springs trail down to the Eagle Creek trail. The trail was really steep. Deb fell a couple of times.

By 9:30 we were on the Eagle Creek trail, which had a much more gentle slope, but had more rocks on the trail. The waterfalls along the way were fabulous! And, like a cherry on top of an ice cream sundae, Tunnel Falls was fantastic! Can you spot Bobaroo?



It was 7 more miles to the Eagle Creek trailhead. The closer we got, the more people we saw. We often could smell the young ladies coming up the trail before we saw them! I arrived at the trailhead shortly after 2. I finally had phone service again! To my surprise, my wife was in Cascade Locks! She picked up Deb and I and we went to eat at the East Wind diner. We enjoyed hamburgers, fries, and milkshakes. Deb's husband, Bob, met us there. I got my resupply boxes and we all had a cold beer to celebrate Deb finishing her hike and me finishing the PCT through Oregon! Our friends, Cody and Jenessa, invited us over for the night. We were treated to a barbecue dinner with delicious steak, salad, beer and wine. Their friend, Erica, also joined us. Erica has been following my blog for some time and had many thoughtful questions for me. We spent several hours talking about life on the trail. It was wonderful!



Jenessa did my laundry for me and even went shopping to get some snacks I needed. It was simply amazing!  
I am so thankful for such kindness!  
I will be back on the trail tomorrow morning, walking in Washington!



# Day 113 - Washington State!

Friday, August 07, 2015

Thursday August 6

I've had two nights with little sleep, but I awoke at 5 this morning. It was wonderful sleeping on a soft bed at Cody and Jenessa's. I packed up my backpack and got fresh water for my water bottles since the water in them was from a spring which had an odd smell.

Jenessa fixed scrambled eggs with steak! Boy, I got a lot of protein this morning. The coffee was also heavenly!

It was so great to see my wife and I think everyone had a lot of fun last night. My wife is heading home this morning but will meet me again at Trout Lake with my resupply boxes. Cody drove me to the Bridge of the Gods. It is hard to believe that hikers are not run over while crossing the bridge since there is no shoulder or sidewalk.



I hit the trail at 9 AM. It is 82.8 miles to my next resupply. I need to average 19.5 miles per day in order to arrive by the end of the fourth day. If I walk a little more on each of the first three days, I can arrive by midday on the fourth day.

I was telling Deb that every time the trail drops to a stream or river, it always goes up on the other side. The bigger the river, the bigger the climb. Guess what the trail did after crossing the Columbia River? It climbed from 216 feet to 3,450 feet in eleven miles! I was elated when I reached the top.



From one viewpoint I could see Mount Hood. As the trail turned north, I could see Mount Adams, Mount Rainier and Mount Saint Helens. Mount Saint Helens always looks odd to

me since there is no snowy top. Soon the trail will head northeast to travel near the base of Mount Adams.

I felt sad this morning having to go separate ways from my wife as well as leaving the hospitality of good friends. I am glad this evening, however, because I hiked 20 miles today and I might just get to catch up on some lost sleep.

I am camped tonight by a bubbling stream. A dove is "cooing" nearby as the sun sets over the hill. Life is good!

I am at PCT mile 2175.1. The elevation here is 1,511 feet.

## Day 114 - Panther Creek

Saturday, August 08, 2015

Friday August 7

As I sat resting alongside the trail, another through-hiker walked by and commented, "Wow, we sure aren't in Oregon anymore!"

What she was referring to was the long climbs that we have faced since entering Washington. Today was a perfect example. I started hiking at 6, and had a 1,700 foot climb to the top of the ridge. That was in the first 3.5 miles. The trail then left the ridge and dropped to the Wind River and then to Panther Creek. From there the trail climbed 3,100 feet over 9 miles to the top of the next ridge. I spent over half of my hiking day trudging uphill!

There were two very nice bridges, one over the Wind River and the other over Panther Creek.



The other problem with hiking up to the ridges is the availability of water. Above 2,200 feet, there has been no water. All of the streams are dry and there are no springs that I know of. Fortunately I carry enough water to get me to the next reliable source, but it would be so much easier if water was more plentiful.

Most of today's hike was through mature forests. I really liked how the morning sunlight shone on the plants alongside the trail.



Later in the day, from the top of the ridge, I saw Mount Adams. I am getting closer every day.



By mid afternoon I found a campsite near a spring. That is a perfect combination for setting up my tent and fixing dinner!  
I was able to start blogging by 5:30 and might get to sleep by 8. It is a warm evening but I have my down jacket handy as the evening cools.  
I am camped at PCT mile 2200.8. I hiked 25.7 miles today. The elevation here is 3,562 feet.

# Day 115 - Indian Heaven Wilderness

Sunday, August 09, 2015

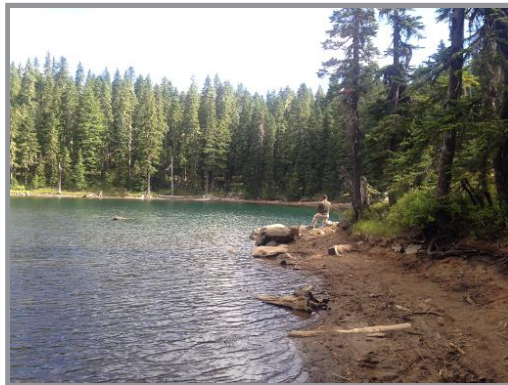
Saturday August 8

I finally noticed what is different in the morning. There are no birds chirping at first light anymore. For that matter, there are hardly any birds at all! Could it be the time of year? I was on the trail at 5:40. My goal today was to hike 25-plus miles in order to have a short hike tomorrow to get to Trout Lake.

The trail was fairly easy today. No big climbs. I quickly passed into the Indian Heaven Wilderness. I don't know any of the history of this area, but the area is pretty. There were a number of beautiful lakes, and a few like this one which is little more than a puddle.



At Blue Lake, I stopped to get water. Two fishermen were having a great time catching and releasing trout. They caught four just in the time I was filling my water bottle.



There were also some interesting rock formations which had numerous little caves. It reminded me of the Subway Cave area in California.





I also passed another milestone.



The weather today has been partly cloudy, but there is no rain in the forecast. I also noticed that there are the sounds of bees everywhere. Some are in the blueberry bushes alongside the trail, but the others seem to be above in the fir trees. They do become pests when I stop to camp. I always zip up my tent bug screen as soon as the tent is up, otherwise I end up trying to chase them out when I go to bed. I am camped tonight at PCT mile 2226.9. The elevation here is 3,954 feet. I hiked 26.1 miles today.

# Day 116 - Trout Lake

Sunday, August 09, 2015

Sunday August 9

Today is a "town day". In addition, I get to spend it with my wife! What could be better? Last night there was a little bit of rain. It was more of a shower, but it did wet down the bushes along the trail. I arose at first light and was hiking by 5:45. I had a little over ten miles to hike to get to the highway to the town of Trout Lake. The bushes were more than happy to deposit their moisture on my pants and shoes.

I originally estimated that I would arrive at the road at 9:30 or 10, but realized that I would be there at 9. My wife drove to Trout Lake last night and was there to pick me up at the trail head!



On the way up, she was a "trail angel" for two south-bound hikers by giving them a ride from town to the trail head! I met them on the trail as I was coming close to the road. They were very appreciative of getting a ride.

My wife and I stopped at the cafe in Trout Lake and enjoyed a good breakfast. I found out that my wife ended up sleeping in the car last night because there were no motel rooms available in town. I think I had better sleeping arrangements than she did!

We got a room at the Trout Lake Inn. I did my laundry, showered, and did my shopping at the local grocery store. I signed the PCT register at the store.



We had lunch at the cafe again. The Mount Adams burger was delicious. It was followed by huckleberry pie and ice cream! This is what heaven must be like!

We then decided to drive up to the trail head to see if there were any hikers needing a

ride to town. On the way there was an overlook where we could see Mount Adams. The clouds covered the top since there are showers in the forecast.



When we got to the trail, no one was waiting, so we picked some blueberries. Just then two through-hikers showed up and we gave them a ride to the grocery store. I'll bet they were surprised!



I enjoyed an amazing evening with my wife and (of course) had dinner at the cafe!  
I hope to return to the trail early tomorrow morning. This has been one of the best resupply stops ever!

## Day 117 - Mt. Adams Wilderness

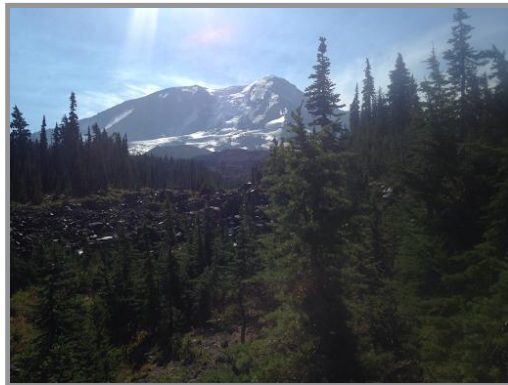
Wednesday, August 12, 2015

Monday August 10

Trout Lake was great, but it's time to get back on the trail. We left the motel at 5:30 and picked up "Cat" who was trying to hitch a ride. She said it was the earliest she had ever got a ride. I believe it, because it was just getting light. We got to the trail just before 6. The trail rose steadily, gaining 2,000 feet in 8 miles. Much of the time the trail wound through burnt trees. I even saw tape across several side trails which are still closed due to the forest fire a month ago.



There were several amazing views of Mount Adams. It was difficult to get a good picture because the sun was rising from behind the mountain.



From time to time I was also able to see Mount Saint Helens and Mount Rainier. One of the obstacles on the trail today were the little trees that bent down from overhead. I usually watch the trail to make sure I don't trip or twist my ankle. The little "bendy" trees have a sharp point that can catch your pack, shirt or head. A couple of times my pack got caught. Once one jabbed me in the arm!





I really liked walking through the alpine forest. The trees all have very short branches and there were many grassy meadows. I even saw a deer. I could tell that the meadows used to be filled with pretty flowers, but they have mostly gone to seed now. There were some pretty purple ones still in bloom.



In the early afternoon I met a lady named Carla who was hiking with her dog, Tank. Come to find out, she lives in Covington, just a few miles from my house! She is doing a section hike from the Bridge of the Gods to Chinook Pass. It sure is a small world. My goal today was to hike far enough that I will get to the Goat Rocks by midday tomorrow. I don't want to get there late in the day and be hurried on the steep rocks. I hiked steadily from 6 AM until 4:30 PM. My feet are not happy about that! I set up my tent and had just cooked my dinner when a thunderstorm hit. I tossed everything into the tent and ate dinner inside as the storm sent hail, lightening and rain. It lasted two hours. I sure hope there are no storm clouds tomorrow! I am camped at PCT mile 2266.7. I hiked 29.6 miles today. The elevation here is 5,295 feet.



## Day 118 - Goat Rocks Wilderness

Wednesday, August 12, 2015

Tuesday August 11

After last night's thunderstorm, I expected the tent to be wet. It wasn't. I guess there was enough of a breeze to dry it out.

I was on the trail at 5:50. Although my tent had dried during the night, the plants along the trail were ready and waiting with their load of water! For the first four miles I waded through bushes. I was soaked from my knees down. Even my shoes sloshed with all the water. This is what I was walking through.

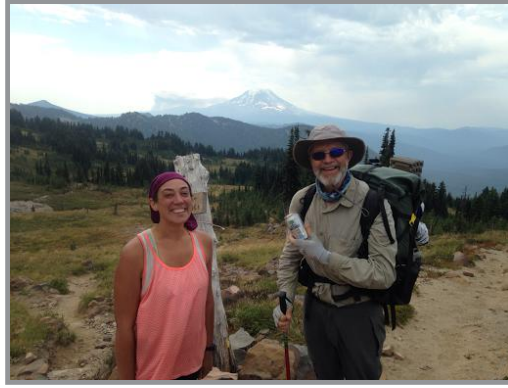


Finally the trail entered the woods and a warm wind slowly dried my clothes. As I approached the Goat Rocks, there was a beautiful waterfall.



The trail then climbed 1,000 feet to Cispus Pass where I "officially" entered the Goat Rocks. Most of the area is above the tree line.

When I neared the trail to Snowgrass Flats, I noticed a group of people gathered there. When I arrived, a lady asked, "Are you a through-hiker?" I said I was, and then she asked, "Do you want a beer?" I smiled and said, "Sure, but do you have one?" She reached into her pack and gave me one! I was amazed!



The group of people were members of the Mountaineers. They pointed out that there was a fire burning on the east flank of Mount Adams. You can see the smoke plume in the photo.

I continued up to the "knife edge" and then continued down for several miles. I didn't take many pictures because the smoke cloud covered the sky. Also, I blogged about this last year when I hiked to the Goat Rocks.

I decided to camp near water, so I stopped at Hidden Springs. My legs and feet are really tired. I put the beer in the ice cold spring water, and shared half of it with "No-Tent". It was the perfect ending to a very physicality challenging day!

I am camped at Hidden Springs, PCT mile 2295.1. I hiked 28.4 miles today. The elevation here is 5,640 feet.

## Day 119 - White Pass

Wednesday, August 12, 2015

Wednesday August 12

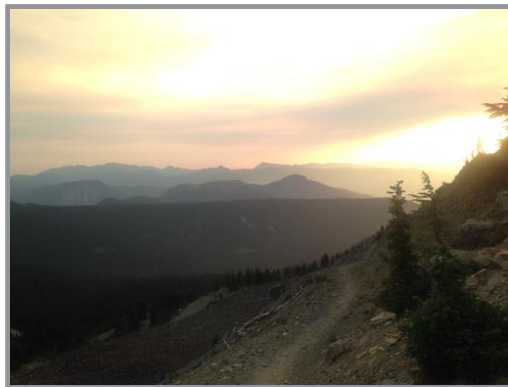
I slept really well at Hidden Springs, except I heard thunder towards Mount Rainier. As it turns out, there was rain, but none where I was camped. I arose shortly after 5 and was on the trail before 6. I had just under 8 miles to hike to the trail head. My wife planned to meet me at 9.

I was hiking a trail that I had hiked last year. Halfway through my hike, I was looking to see if there were any deer or elk, because I had seen tracks on the trail. Suddenly, I heard the thunder of hooves on the hill above me. It was a herd of mountain goats!



I have always wanted to see them and now I have!

The sky is still filled with smoke from the Mount Adams fire. The sun shone red!



I arrived at the trail head at 8:40 and walked up to the Kracker Barrel store at White Pass. Valorie arrived within five minutes and we went for breakfast at the Kettle Restaurant in Enumclaw. I had an entire omelette! It was yummy!

At home, I had the normal town day activities. My wife did my laundry, I showered, and then organized my food. I am going to skip ahead to Snoqualmie Pass, since I have already hiked the section from White Pass to Snoqualmie Pass.

My son took me to the store to get a few more snacks. I now have all my food for the next four days.

For dinner, we went to the Black Diamond Pizza and Deli. My daughter met us there and we had a fantastic meal. At home, my daughter gave me a wonderful foot massage. My feet are in heaven! Thank you Anne and Thomas!

## Day 120 - Alpine Lakes Wilderness

Saturday, August 15, 2015

Thursday August 13

As I mentioned in my blog yesterday, I am jumping ahead to Snoqualmie Pass. I have done the section from White Pass to Snoqualmie Pass, and I need to take advantage of the days left in August to finish the sections of the trail that I haven't hiked.

My wife drove me to the trailhead and I was hiking by 6:30. I knew the hiking would be difficult today because the trail climbs steadily, gaining 3,000 feet in six miles.

What I didn't anticipate was how difficult the trail was to walk on. In several places it looked like water had run down the trail, leaving rocks and roots to step on, over or around. For many miles the trail climbed through talus fields. I slipped many times when rocks would shift or roll under my feet. This is what the talus fields looked like.



And, it didn't help that my pack was heavy with four days of food. I compare today's effort to the days when I was crossing the passes in the high Sierras. I have seldom put so much effort into so few miles.

To offset the difficulty, however, were the fantastic views of the rugged peaks. Mount Rainier could be seen in the distance, but the smoke from the Mount Adams fire made everything hazy.



Reliable water sources were few and far between since this summer has been the driest on record in Washington. There were several pretty deep blue lakes along the way, but the trail usually did not come close enough to use them as a water source. I carry 2.5 liters of water, and by midday I was down to one-half liter. That is very unusual for me and kept me worried for several hours.

Around noon I noticed a mountain goat walking up the trail ahead of me. It didn't seem to be afraid of me. I yelled and waved my trekking pole and it finally climbed up a steep rock above me.



By early afternoon the trail descended almost 2,700 feet to Lemah creek. I hiked another half mile to a large creek that was supposed to have several campsites near the creek. I couldn't find them! I resigned myself to carrying water to dry camp. I was mentally and physically exhausted. As I headed uphill away from the creek, I noticed a side trail heading into the woods. I followed it and jumped for joy as I saw a wonderful campsite! I am worried about the weather. Thunderstorms are forecast for tonight and tomorrow. I'll just hope for the best.

I am camped at PCT mile 2424.1. I hiked 22.1 miles today. The elevation here is 3,287 feet.



## Day 121 - Waptus & Deep Lake

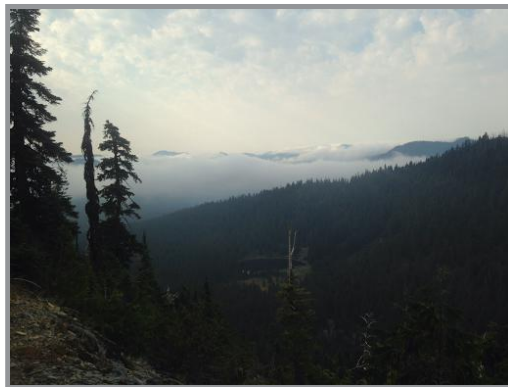
Saturday, August 15, 2015

Friday August 14

The rain and thunderstorms that I expected last night didn't happen. It was partly cloudy when I crawled out of the tent at 5:25. I was a happy camper!

I knew today was going to be physically challenging because the trail climbed back up to the top of the next ridge, slightly less than 3,000 feet of elevation gain. The good part about it was that the trail was in much better shape. I just need to concentrate on keeping up a good walking rhythm.

As I got higher, I noticed thunder clouds starting to build over on the next ridge, and clouds beginning to enter the valley. More about that in a moment.



The mountains in this area are all really rugged. That's why there are so many steep climbs! Once over the top of the ridge, I saw Waptus Lake.



Over forty years ago, my wife and I hiked into the lake and camped. We were trying to start our family and it is possible that our oldest son was conceived here!

As I dropped down to the Waptus River, I remember hiking up the Pacific Crest Trail to Deep Lake so long ago. I had woken up early, way before breakfast time, so I saw a trail sign, "Deep Lake, 5 miles". Being young and energetic, I figured I could quickly hike up to the lake, check it out, and return for breakfast. I didn't take any food or water. Even though I was a fast hiker, it took a long time to reach the lake. On the way back, I suffered from low blood sugar. I'll never forget how much I craved for something sugary.

On the hike today, I saw the same trail signs. It seemed to take forever to get to the lake, and as I hiked I thought to myself, "What if you met that young man from long ago

hurrying back down the trail? What would you say to him?" I puzzled with that question for some time. I finally decided that I would say, "Hey, next time you see your parents, tell them that you met an old guy who just wanted to send his love one last time!" Both of my parents passed away some time ago. What would you say if somehow you met your younger self?

When I am hiking for long periods of time, sometimes I get lost in thought. Perhaps that is part of the hiking adventure as well.

The clouds grew thicker as the day wore on, so I decided to make camp early. I found a campsite just beyond Deep Lake. As I was cooking my chicken and rice, it began to sprinkle. I quickly ate dinner and retreated to my tent. The ground here has lots of pine needles, so if there are thunder showers, I'm hoping it will soak into the ground rather than puddle. It is also much cooler, so I am already wearing my down jacket and am bundled up in my sleeping bag. The rain is coming as showers, so I expect to hear the "potter-patter" of rain drops all night. Hopefully I won't hear any falling trees!

I am camped just beyond Deep Lake at PCT mile 2445.7. I hiked 21.7 miles today. The elevation here is 4,308 feet.

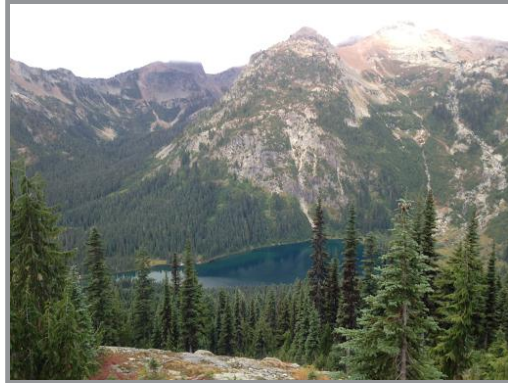
## Day 122 - Lakes in Fog

Sunday, August 16, 2015

Saturday August 15

The rain last night quit around midnight. Then the wind picked up and it was gusty for several hours. I could hear the gusts coming as the trees swished about. All I could think about were several of the nearby dead snags. Would this be the time they came down? Fortunately, nothing came down, and the wind dried most of the rain from my tent.

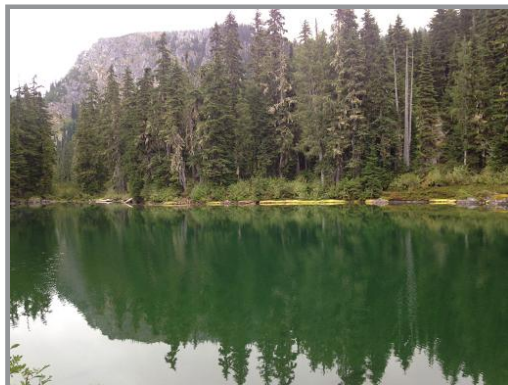
I was back on the trail at 5:45. I had a long climb up to the ridge. I had one last look at Deep Lake before I crossed the ridge.



The clouds hung around the mountains all day. When the trail would come to an overlook, I often could see little but hills shrouded in clouds. Several times the trail even climbed up into the clouds! The blowing fog made everything damp.

Of course the rain wet down the bushes alongside the trail. I put on my rain pants and raincoat to keep from getting soaked. The nice thing about walking a trail that is heavily used is that other people were walking ahead of me. That meant less water remained on the bushes when I went by! I soon noticed that my rain pants weren't needed, and they were starting to get me wet from my own perspiration. I took them off for the rest of the day.

The trail today took me past many beautiful lakes, including Deception Lake. I liked the way the moss reflected in the water.



I did see several grouse. Their explosive takeoffs always startled me! I also saw a mother deer and her two fawns. They are so cute when they leap away through the forest!

By midday I reached Mig Lake. It had several good campsites, and I picked one that was

more secluded and sheltered by trees from wind blowing off the lake.



My dinner tonight was Spaghetti with meat sauce, enhanced with Fritos, pepperoni, olive oil and a dash of "slap yo mama"!

Some people have asked me how I know when there is phone service. Most of the time I have no service at all, so I leave my phone in "airplane mode" to keep it from running down the battery. If I need to use the phone, either to send a message, make a call or upload my blog, I'll check to see if there is service when I reach the top of a mountain or if I can see a city or major highway. Often it makes a difference which side of a mountain you are on. Sometimes I'll just check for service when I am going to use the phone for something else. I often get frustrated when I really need to contact someone and the signal is so weak that it won't even send a text message. On the other hand, sometimes I can send a text message, even when a phone call won't go through.

I am camped at Mig Lake, PCT mile 2468.5. I hiked 22.8 miles today. The elevation here is 4,665 feet.

## Day 123 - Stevens Pass

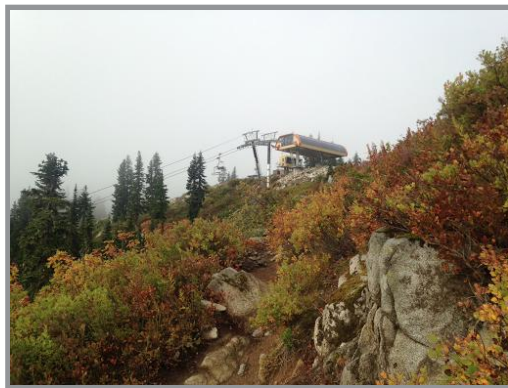
Sunday, August 16, 2015

Sunday August 16

I thought I was done with the rain, but after I got into my tent last night at Mig Lake, it started drizzling and then raining. The clouds were thick and by morning the inside of my tent was damp. I bundled up my wet tent and damp sleeping bag with the intent of drying them later on.

I was on the trail by 5:45 and had eight miles to hike to get to Stevens Pass. There were two 1,000+ foot climbs to do, but they seemed to go quickly. The bushes were loaded with rain from last night, but I had my rain gear on. Only my feet got soaked.

The sun was burning off the clouds as I approached Stevens Pass. The trail passed under the ski lifts and I knew I was getting close to the pass.



I have never played music while I hiked, basically because I like to listen to the sounds of the forest. Today, however, I thought I would try it as I approached the pass. I played a few of my favorite songs through the iPhone speakers. That way I could hear the forest and the music at the same time. The first song was "All of Me" by John Legend. I broke into tears. As I have said before, I easily get emotional while hiking, and this song spoke to my heart. As I came in sight of the pass, the song "Hallelujah" by The Canadian Tenors was playing. I lifted my arms over my head and yelled "hallelujah" as I completed this difficult section!



I walked across the highway to look at the trailhead heading north. There were several signs warning hikers that the trail was closed ahead due to the Blankenship fire.

I have been worrying for the last few days about what to do next. I could hike north from



Stevens Pass, but would have to exit the trail midway. I could take the boat to Stehekin, and hike north from there, but that would mean a long drive and I am not sure the trail is open from that point on. Instead, I have decided to skip this section for now, and continue on from Rainy Pass. Perhaps I will come back sometime to finish this section, but for now my body and heart tell me to finish starting from Rainy Pass.

At 10:30 my wife arrived to take me home for a zero day. On the way out of the ski lodge, "Dr. Beaker" saw me and asked if she could get a ride to Hiker Heaven in Baring. I met her several times on the trail, but most recently at the town of Etna. Of course we gave her a ride and got to see the Dinsmore's Hiker Heaven.

My wife and I stopped in Seattle to celebrate my grandson's eighth birthday. I got to shower there, dried my tent and sleeping bag, and got my laundry done. We had a great time and had wonderful food.

I plan to rest tomorrow and gather supplies for my final push to the Canadian border. I feel sad that wildfires have disrupted my "fairytale" adventure, but I feel that I have made the right decision for me.

When I arrived at Stevens Pass, I had reached PCT mile 2476.5.

## Day 124 - Zero Day at Home

Tuesday, August 18, 2015

Monday August 17

After sleeping in a tent for over 120 days, it seems odd to sleep in a bed! I am taking a zero day today. No hiking; only rest! Of course I woke up at 5 even though I could have slept later.

It is difficult to take a zero day at home. Everything is so familiar. I took a shower even though I wasn't dirty. How odd is that? I even took time to pay bills and fiddle around with my home PC.

I took my sleeping bag outside and let it bake in the sun. It should be much warmer the next time I use it!

I figured that I needed 4 days of food to get from Rainy Pass to the Canadian border. The plan is to drop me off later tomorrow at the Rainy Pass trailhead. I hope to hike for several hours tomorrow.

I spent a few hours this morning to organize my food and went to the store in Black Diamond to get a few extra snacks. It was the first time that I had driven a car in four months!

Of course, I had to enjoy a cold beer as I sat outside on the deck!



I am anxious about the final section to the border. Perhaps it is the same feeling I get every time I leave town to get back on the trail. The other concern is with the weather. It looks like more cloudy or rainy weather is in the forecast. I just have to deal with it!

My wife plans on taking a road trip while I hike the trail, and then meet me at Manning Park.

It is hard for me to believe that I will be done with the trail in a few days. What an adventure this has been!

## Day 125 - Rainy Pass

Saturday, August 22, 2015

Tuesday August 18

My day of rest is over. It's time to finish the final leg of this adventure. I am so fortunate to have a wife who is willing to drive me to the trail. It is almost a four-hour drive to Rainy Pass on the Cascade Loop highway. On the way, we had a great breakfast at the Pancake House. I loaded up with carbs having a full serving of French toast and hash browns. It seems that I have more energy when I start my day with carbohydrates.

I am always nervous heading back out on the trail. Today was no exception. It felt like my stomach was in a knot. For some reason the North Cascades intimidate me. Perhaps it's because they appear so steep and massive. Also, I worry about the weather. There are supposed to be increasing clouds in the next few days. For today, however, the weather was perfect! Beautiful blue sky with temperatures in the 70s. We arrived just before 2 PM.



My goal today was to make it over the first ridge, a 2,000 foot climb. As I headed up the trail, I was amazed at how well maintained the trail was. It had a moderate slope and was well groomed. I was going to be able to walk quickly.

When I got above the trees, the views were absolutely amazing. In the distance I could see Glacier Peak. The nearby mountains looked similar to the mountains in the high Sierras. As the trail went over the ridge, all I could say was "Wow! This is amazing!"



I hiked until 5:30. There was a great campsite very near a stream. The view from the campsite was also fantastic.



So far I am really impressed with the North Cascades.

It is just over 50 miles to the Canadian border from my campsite. Assuming I can hike twenty miles each day, I should arrive on Friday, two and a half days from now. I can hardly believe it!

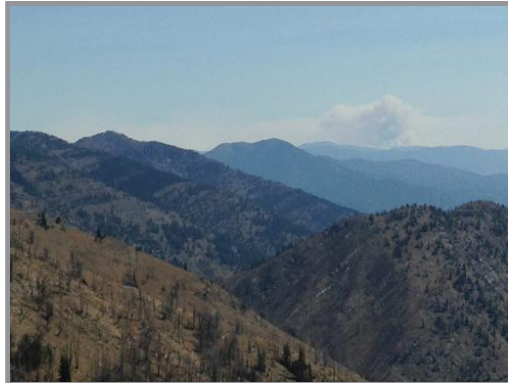
I am camped tonight at PCT mile 2608.9. The elevation here is 6,230 feet. I hiked 9.6 miles this afternoon.

## Day 126 - Pasayten Wilderness

Saturday, August 22, 2015

Wednesday August 19

As I crested the ridge, all I could see was a towering plume of smoke. Not just one, but three separate fires were burning somewhere to the north.



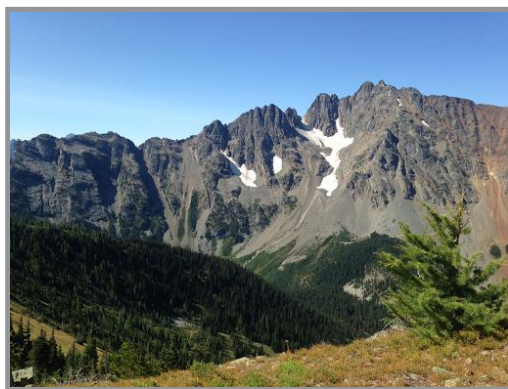
My mind wrestled with the thought of a trail closure. Not now; not on my hike! Not when I am this close to the end!

The morning began with birds chirping in the woods. I hadn't heard them for quite some time. It made me smile.

I was packed and hiking by 6 and knew this would be a challenging day. After a short climb to Methow Pass, the trail descended to the valley and crossed the Methow River. It followed the river for several miles before climbing 2,700 feet back to the ridge again. I counted over 30 switchbacks!

When I got to the top is when I noticed the smoke plumes. I checked to see if I had phone service. I didn't. It is so frustrating not to be able to get information when on the trail. I was resigned to continue on to Harts Pass where there is a ranger station. I figured that if there was a new trail closure I would find out there.

The views of the mountains continue to be exceptional.



When I was almost to Harts Pass, I met a couple of ladies who were section hiking, headed to Canada. They mentioned that they had met "More Cowbell"! I had hiked with him for several days in Southern California. However, since he is ahead of me by several hours, it is unlikely I would see him on the trail. He has a very fast pace.



The ladies had run out of water and were hoping to find some at Harts Pass. I told them that I didn't think there was water there, but I could share a liter with them. As I suspected, there was no water there. Fortunately, there was a little creek just a half mile up the trail. I filled up and carried an extra two liters for cooking tonight.

As the afternoon wore on, the sky filled with smoke. I don't know if it was from the fires I spotted or from the Lake Chelan fires. In any case, the smoke was so thick I could barely see the ridges above me. The sun looked like a big red ball. There were even little flakes of soot falling like snow!

I started looking for a campsite at 3, but as fate would have it, the trail followed the hillsides for many miles. I passed a sign that said I was entering the Pasayten Wilderness. A short time later I finally found a good campsite near a small stream. I am camped tonight at PCT mile 2635.8. I hiked 26.9 miles today. The elevation here is 6,591 feet. The border is just 24.3 miles ahead!

# Day 127 - Canada

Saturday, August 22, 2015

Thursday August 20



A flood of emotions overwhelmed me as I caught sight of the monument at the U.S. and Canadian border. I had walked from Mexico to Canada! Tears filled my eyes.

It is hard to explain all of my emotions. Mostly I am thankful.

I am so thankful for all of the people who made this possible.

My wife was my resupply person and she never missed sending a box or giving me encouragement. She drove for hours to get me to trailheads and meet me as I would finish.

My family gave me the courage to keep going when times were difficult. My son and his friend Nick surprised me with the ultimate trail angel gift by meeting me at Crater Lake, feeding me and treating me to an airplane ride over the trail. And thank you to my daughter Anne and my brother Ron for sending such wonderful treats to Crater Lake. To my son, Thomas, thank you for house sitting and a special thanks for the brownies. They were a special treat each morning as I got on my way.

Also, thank you goes to our friends Cody and Jenessa, who dropped everything at a moments notice and hosted my wife and I for a wonderful evening.

I owe a huge debt of thanks to the trail angel, "Legend", who showed up when I was ready to quit and helped me find the courage to go on.

Others on the trail gave me advice and help. A special thank you to "No Trace" and "Unbreakable" for answering all my silly questions and helping me solve my problem with my backpack.

A special thank you to "Willie", as we hiked many hundreds of miles together. He became a good friend and helped me become a better hiker.

Another thank you goes to my hiking buddies, Deb and Patti. They gave me encouragement to believe in myself, and to make a dream become reality. And thank you Deb for having the courage to walk with me and enjoy the trail from Timberline Lodge to Cascade Locks.

There are so many other trail angels to thank. Bob Riess hosted me when I first arrived in San Diego. He gave me the confidence I needed at the start of this journey.

Some trail angels left coolers of treats. Others gave me rides or shared their homes. It is incredible that they did this for a complete stranger.

I would not be standing at the monument without everyone's help.

You all believed in me. Thank you!

A special treat awaited me at the monument. It was "More Cowbell"! He had arrived just twenty minutes before. We reminisced about times and people who we had met on the trail. It was so good to see him!



I am going to camp tonight at the campground just beyond the monument. I will hike out to Manning Park tomorrow morning and meet my wife there.

Wow, this is an amazing adventure!

## A Dedication

Saturday, August 22, 2015

I have been thinking about this for a long time, almost from the first day of my hiking adventure. I wanted to dedicate this hike to a very special person. A person who I loved. A person who died young.

I chose the trail name Bobaroo long before I took a step on the Pacific Crest Trail. The name Bobaroo was given to me by my niece, Angel Betts. I can still hear the ring in her voice when she would see me, "Hey, Bobaroo, how are you?" Angel took her life many years ago. But her memory lives on.

When people on the trail asked me my trail name, I would tell them it was Bobaroo. I usually would have to repeat it, or say something like, "it's just like kangaroo except with the word Bob. You know, Bob-aroo".

Some people asked me how I got my trail name, and I would tell them the story. They understood, and many had tears come to their eyes.

I have proudly carried the name from border to border. I wish to dedicate this hike and all that has transpired to the special person who gave me my trail name. Angel, may you rest in peace.



To my readers, thank you for following along. Now you too know the rest of the story.

# Thoughts on finishing the PCT

Saturday, August 22, 2015

Thursday August 20

I am laying in my tent listening to the wind in the trees. Sometimes it sounds like a river; a soothing sound. Sometimes the gusts are stronger and a few trees creak and groan.

There are birds living here too. I believe they are Camp Robbers. They make a funny chirping sound. One landed close by, as if to announce that it needed something to rob. A chipmunk lives here too. I heard it chiding me as I was setting up my tent.

There are plenty of insects. As soon as I set down my pack, the black flies smelled the lingering perspiration. They were also interested in the smell of my dinner. One fly managed to get into the tent. With a little bit of encouragement, I got it to fly out as I zipped shut the mosquito netting.

I am just a visitor in this place. As I have wandered from Mexico to Canada, I have always tried to remember that. I made it my goal to never knowingly harm any animal on the trail, whether it be an ant, butterfly, beetle, lizard, stink bug, baby skunk, dragonfly, spider, caterpillar, worm, moth, slug, bee, grasshopper, snake, fly, centipede, or frog. I want them to live at least for another day.

I have witnessed that all life is connected. The forest that was burned by fire appears to be tragic. Indeed it was for the living forest that died. But new plants are given a chance to thrive. And new creatures find this their home.

Most of all, however, I have a restored faith in people. Even though I was a complete stranger, they opened their homes to me. They gave me transportation and went out of their way to get me to my destination. They prepared fantastic dishes of food and tasty beverages and invited me to partake until I was full.

I met extraordinary people who were also walking the trail. Most would share anything that they had if there was a need. We all had a common bond and the same goal. We all were trying to do something extraordinary.

I feel sad that I'm heading back to the busy world again. I will miss my nightly cup of hot chocolate and laying here listening to the music of the wild.

But I have reached my goal and come to an ending. I believe that as one door closes, another will open.

I just need the courage to walk on through.



# Manning Park

Saturday, August 22, 2015

Friday August 21

As I lay in my tent last night at the campground just beyond the northern monument, I found it hard to sleep. Like the ending of a good book, I didn't want it to be over. And yet, this adventure has come to an end.

I could have slept in, but it was getting light and I had eight miles to go to get to the lodge at Manning Park. The trail climbed 1,000 feet. Unfortunately, the trail was in poor condition with lots of trees across the trail and steep slippery slopes. It was unusually dark in the forest, so I decided to play music, both to pass the time and to alert other creatures of my presence.

The weather is turning this morning. Several times there were rain showers; just enough to wet the bushes. As the rain showers fell, the sun peeked through for just a moment and created an amazing rainbow pointing to the northern terminus. What an appropriate ending message from Mother Nature!



For the first time on this hike, I used my umbrella. I was rather awkward trying to maneuver with both hands full. The umbrella is one item I probably would not carry again. I arrived at the lodge at 8:30. There were no rooms at the lodge, but I got one at the hostel. The room is tiny, and shares a bathroom with five other rooms. There is no phone service here and no way to contact my wife to let her know where I am.

I got a vegetarian omelette at the restaurant and then decided to wait for my wife in the lodge.

"More Cowbell" stayed at the hostel last night, so I got to visit with him one last time. He left on the bus headed to Vancouver.

I had a Wi-Fi connection at the lodge, so I posted my successful ending on Facebook. I immediately got many congratulatory messages. A few other hikers showed up throughout the day, but none I knew.

My wife arrived in the early evening and I discovered that she had reserved a cabin! The manager at the lodge was gracious enough to refund my money on the room at the hostel.

We had a wonderful dinner at the Pinewoods restaurant. Because I was a PCT hiker, we both got a free drink. For dessert we enjoyed chocolate cake with chocolate ice cream! It was odd this evening as I took a shower and removed the protective tape from my toes. I won't be needing it anymore. The same was true for my toiletry supplies and my drinking water.

I read on Facebook that a lot of hikers are quitting the trail at Stevens Pass. There are

just too many wildfires and uncertainty. I feel lucky to have been able to hike the north cascades and to see the PCT northern terminus.

Manning Park is beautiful, but I am ready to head home and begin a new adventure. I am interested in becoming a trail angel. I want to pay back a little kindness that was shown to me.

But first I need rest and according to my wife, to put some meat back on my bones!





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